

Dissertation

**Title** How does public perception of the what major UK superstores are doing to protect the environment relate to the stores' published Environmental Policies.

**Author** Jackson, A

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TITLE

**How does public perception of the what major  
UK superstores are doing to protect the  
environment relate to the stores' published  
Environmental Policies.**

Name – Amy E Jackson

Course – BSc Geography.

2008

I declare that the main text of this dissertation is no longer than 10,000 words, and is all my own work.

Signed –

Amy Jackson

## Abstract.

Environmental damage is an ever increasing problem. As supermarkets are a main source of the general public's waste I have looked at what the superstores are doing to help reduce their involvement in environmental damage. I am also trying to see if the environmental policies that the stores have adopted are getting across to the general public. I have surveyed what the store has published about their environmental policies. I have also conducted questionnaires to get the public's view and knowledge on what the stores are doing.

I found that very little of the information that is published on the superstores' policies is getting across to the public. It is mainly the measures that are being clearly advertised in stores that are getting through to the customers.

For the study to be more reliable a larger population would be sampled, from a wider area. The study would also benefit if it focused on less and went into it in more detail, e.g. just look at whether the environmental policies of one store are getting across to the customer.

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### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Marks and Spencers, Tesco, Asda, Morrisons and Sainsburys for the information I was provided with. I would like to thank the lecturers at the University of Central Lancashire. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their continued support.

## **Introduction**

As a result of the present climate of the developing of environmentally conscious lifestyles and government initiatives to try to limit impact of our everyday lives upon the planet I began to consider the part played by large superstores. I was aware that all businesses had to have some policies relating to the reduction of their impact on the environment and began to wonder about the relationship between the published policies of superstores and public perception of their efforts.

Therefore, I investigated what message is getting across to the general public by conducting a questionnaire. I was present as each individual completed their questionnaire, the exercise was conducted in the East Lancashire area and there were 60 people in my sample.

The superstores I shall be selected these stores as they are the largest superstores in England, the majority sell food, home ware, and clothing. To enable me to me to relate public perception to published policies I visited stores to conduct a survey and evaluated websites and published policies.

The aim of this dissertation is to determine public perception of what major UK superstores are doing to protect the environment and relate this to the stores' published Environmental Policies. It will include analysis of the information available to the public from the stores and public perceptions of the measures being taken by the stores.

The objectives are to determine -

- What each superstore is doing to help prevent further damage to the environment.
- Which is the best superstore in terms of initiatives taken and the potential amount of impact these initiatives may have?

- The public's perception of the superstores efforts to combat damaging environmental impact.
- To what extent the superstores Environmental Policy influence customer views and store usage.
- which initiatives the public are aware of and how this relates to the superstores publications and advertisements of their Environmental Policy.



## **Literature Review.**

To look at and fully understand what I am trying to achieve from my dissertation I will need to look at research and ideas that have already been studied. I will need to not only understand what I am doing but also will need to have in-depth knowledge of other work that contributes to what I am doing. Looking into, how does public perception of what the major UK superstores are doing to protect the environment relate to the stores' published Environmental Policy I will need to understand what environmental damage is, how much environmental damage is occurring and what can be done to prevent further environmental damage.

The general public are becoming more aware of the relationships between business and the environment. The increase in media attention around controversies like the BSE crisis and genetically modified crops is increasing their knowledge and having the public question the methods of the retail industry. Environmental damage has been occurring over centuries as a result of industry, it is not a new phenomenon, the coal industry has been linked to economic development and an increase in environmental impacts, and mining left huge amounts of physical damage with pollution and waste that is still being cleared up some 50 years later. An article on Marks and Spencer's environmental proposal states that "Attempts made by retailers to improve their competitiveness, (such as increasing sales floor space, extended opening hours, daily delivery schedules and the increasing provision of air conditioning in stores) have increased the output of environmental impacts. Many

retail managers are also measured and rewarded according to operational efficiency, which sometimes directly conflicts with attempts to increase environmental efficiency.” ([www.fsn.co.uk](http://www.fsn.co.uk)) These conflicts are becoming increasingly hard to balance as, “The environment is in the process of becoming a major new competitive area for business. Understanding the impact of the relevant issues and responding to the resulting opportunities and threats will become an important source of competitive advantage. (Elkington and Burke, 1987)” (environment and business). These statements both show how a relationship between business and the environment is essential for businesses to move forward and the environment to be preserved. Tesco is taking this thought onboard and have stated that they “take a very practical approach to environmental sustainability. We know that neglecting our responsibilities may jeopardise our sources of supply in the future. We also know that optimising our environmental performance often goes hand in hand with reducing our business costs and maximising our productivity” (tesco.com). The use of the environment as a competing factor has been noted as within 5 days of Marks and Spencer announcing its environmental action plan, plan A, Tesco committed £500million to promote its carbon labelling and to calculate and reduce its carbon footprint. Other leading stores have also created and released their own environmental plans. Each leading supermarket store has now included a breakdown of their most important factors of their environmental policies onto their web sites. Marks and Spencer’s have broken down their policies into subsections to attempt to do as much as possible for the environment; it has been broken down into climate change, waste and sustainable raw materials. Other less obvious stores have taken environmentally friendly steps as well, “By working with its toy suppliers to help reduce packaging, wall-mart, for example, claims to have saved 1,000 barrels of oil, 3,800 trees – and

millions of dollars in transportation costs.”([www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com)) This statement supported by others like that of Spanish manufacture and retailer Zara that is “delivering new styles to its stores in a fraction of the time it takes competitors- thanks to supply chain innovations that include acquiring fabrics in just four colours and postponing dyeing and printing until close to manufacture to minimize inventories and reduce waste” ([www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com)) by reducing waste Zara will not only help the environment but will also save money.

Many supermarket stores have started their campaigns to help the environment by focussing on the use of carrier bags. It has been estimated that the free carrier bags supplied at supermarkets amounts to 100,000 tonnes of waste sent to land fill per annum across the UK. “At their main shop, 80% of consumers put everything or most items into free carrier bags supplied at check-out.” (wrap. co.uk (choose to reuse)). A study conducted by wrap looked at the use of carrier bags in 8 stores, in 2 different areas of the country, for 10 weeks. They promoted the idea of re-using bags on the radio, newspaper, TV, in store and at point of sale. During this time it was seen that there was a general increase in sales of bags for life. Interviews were conducted to find out peoples attitudes towards reusing bags. "The bag reuse behaviour and associated attitudes, for example the number of people in possession of a reusable bag at the time of the interview increased by 8-11% between the start and the end of the interview." (wrap. co.uk (choose to reuse)). This research shows that with publicity the general publics’ attitude can be changed and that they will make steps to try to help prevent further environmental damage. The general public need to be educated about what they can do. It shows that the retailers can make a change to the publics’ opinion and that if they did use there power for the good of the environment there will

be results.

Another large area of waste to landfill created by the major U.K. retailers is the transit packaging. The use of re-usable packaging offers both environmental and business benefits. Argos trailed sofa bags; they found that "During the trial the sofa bag was shown to be capable of at least seven uses. It reduced packaging, improved product protection and was welcomed by customers. (wrap.co.uk (packaging)). B & Q have also trailed re-usable transit packaging, they used kitchen worktop carrierpacs they found that the most trips made by a single Carrierpac during the trial was 18 and the average number of uses was six. During the trial, no damage to worktops was reported. (wrap.co.uk (packaging)). Both these trials have shown that the steps towards helping protect the environment are also effective for the business as less costs will occur in the long run and helps towards improved customer service.

It is not only the retailers responsibility to reduce the environmental damage that occurs, there has to be a shared factor with the producers. The way the products are made and the materials used can contribute to environmental damage. Coca-cola has looked at the amount of PET waste created by the bottles. "The successful project resulted in a weight reduction of the bottles from 26g to 24g - a saving of 8% – resulting in the lightest 500ml PET carbonated soft drink bottles that CCE has used in GB. When the project is complete, almost 700 million of the new bottles will be produced annually saving approximately 1400 tonnes of PET plastic every year." (wrap.co.uk(coca-cola)). This shows how the packaging that is essential for the product can also be adapted for the better; it is not just the retailers' responsibility to change.

Many of the policies suggest that environmental damage is centred around pollution, the co2 emissions that the company has, sending large amounts of waste to landfill and the large amounts of packaging and plastic bags that are used within the business. There are often many references to “climate change” but yet there is no scientific description of what climate change is and what, in fact climate change is, whether the change is due pollution, sun spots or a natural repetitive fluctuation in the worlds temperatures.

I will look at whether the companies are really taking responsibility or just doing what they have to for their corporate responsibility. To see whether the steps being taken by the retail businesses are having an impact on the general public and if the steps taken are substantial enough.

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## **Methodology**

I initially set out to find out what and how much the general public knew about the efforts made by some of the major superstores in the United Kingdom to promote environmental benefits. To do this I first had to familiarise myself with what the main stores were doing. I looked on the internet at each of the superstores websites to see what they had publicised to the general public about their Environmental Policy. I also went into some stores to see if there was any additional material on display. I asked in the stores for the full environmental policies and was informed that they were generally publicised on the internet. To fully understand the implications of the policies that are being promoted I first needed to know what the major causes of environmental damage are, how these relate to the damage the stores may be creating and whether the policies are adequate to make a large impact towards reducing environmental damage.

To get the view of the general public I composed a questionnaire. This questionnaire is aimed at finding out if:-

- The messages being promoted by the superstores are getting across to the general public.
- Greater involvement by a superstore would influence shopping habits.
- Enough is currently being done by the superstores.

The questionnaires were all completed in my presence. Although being present while the participant was filling the questionnaire in ensured that the questionnaire was returned and enabled me to control my sample it may have made some people



insecure and answer the way they thought I would want them to. The criteria used for selection of sample were a balance of approximate age, gender and perceived ethnicity. I have tried to make it representative of shoppers by controlling the balance of the sample as above. I had to be conscious of the length of time that the questionnaire was going to take to complete and so had to limit the number of questions asked. The questionnaire introduced an element of objectivity as it was completed by a cross section of the shopping public. Some of the questions have lent themselves to quantitative analysis.

I then surveyed the stores to see what was being advertised in them about their Environmental Policy. I felt it was important to see what was being advertised as that would be the best method of getting the main points of the stores Environmental Policy across to and engaging the public in environmental protection issues. The problems with doing this survey were that it was just from my viewpoint. The stores that were surveyed were from a very small area of the United Kingdom, it would only give a view of this area, East Lancashire and Preston. Stores from a wider area would ideally be surveyed to see whether every store from a chain is advertising the same policies to the same degree or whether left to the discretion of the store management. The survey relied largely on the visual impact presented; however this was what I perceived to be the main medium for the store to get its message across. By nature of the way the survey has been conducted it is more subjective than objective and qualitative than quantitative.

As I was advised that the internet was the main source of information for the public. I chose to survey their websites to see which were the most user friendly. The information on the websites is important as the public would have to be able to

understand what is being put across to them and how it would include them. The use of websites would show an overall view of the company and therefore I have made the assumption that it gives a fairer comparator. For the public to engage with the material it would need to be eye catching, interesting and easy to locate as it relies upon an individual devoting their time to read it. In store information to direct the public to the website needs to be clearly and prominently displayed if it is to encourage individuals to access it. The problems with the website survey are that the websites in general have a lot of information on them and are in essence a whole store on a small screen. I feel it is fair to assume that the prominence of the link from the home page to the Environmental Policy is indicative of the importance the company places on this issue. The surveys have all been conducted by me and therefore the assumptions I have made may not be the same as someone else. By nature of the way the survey has been conducted it is more subjective than objective and qualitative rather than quantitative.

The accuracy of the surveys, both in store and online is enhanced by the fact that all were conducted by the same person; this also adds an element of moderation. The use of the in store survey may give a representation of the area and/or staffs enthusiasm for the policy whereas the internet is more representative of the corporate view.

The sampling procedures were restricted due to geographical location; I decided to sample stores in one geographical area to give a snap shot of the impact of the policies in store. I used two stores from each company select those of similar size and selling similar products.

I conclude that the methodology will result is a broad base of information to make valid conclusions about the question posed.

## Results

I began by identifying what I consider to be the major causes of environmental damage related to this study through internet research and reading. This are-

- Land transport (cars, lorries etc)
- Air transport
- Energy use, including heating, cooling and energy using appliances.

This is supported by an article in the Yale Journal.<sup>1</sup>

I continued my research to ascertain how superstores may be contributing to environmental damage.

According to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, retailers use 275 kilowatt hours (kWh) of energy per square metre. That's 3 times as much as commercial offices (85kWh), 3.5 times as much as warehouses (81kWh) and 6 times as much as factories (47kWh). (Royal Commission on environmental pollution)<sup>2</sup>. I suggest the following to be some of the contributory factors in this extensive use of energy –

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<sup>1</sup>Yale Journal identifies products that cause greatest environmental damage. [http://www.terraily.com/reports/Yale\\_Journal\\_Identifies\\_Products\\_That\\_Cause\\_Greatest\\_Environmental\\_Damage\\_999.html](http://www.terraily.com/reports/Yale_Journal_Identifies_Products_That_Cause_Greatest_Environmental_Damage_999.html) (March 2008)

<sup>2</sup>The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution. <http://www.rcep.org.uk/>. (March 2008)

- These stores are extremely large and have to be heated to make the customer comfortable and lots of extremely bright lights burn all day long;

this has increased in recent years with the introduction of 24 hours opening in many Asda and Tesco stores.

- The transportation of the products generally uses large Lorries and covering great distances as many product sources are far from stores to keeping costs low.
- As a consequence of their business, there is also the production of large amounts of waste both at the store and as customers dispose of the packaging the products are sold in. This has to be disposed of often at the expense of energy – to transport waste and/or incinerate it.

The above shows the major causes of environmental damage to be clearly and closely linked to superstore operation.

In order to evaluate the public perceptions of what the major superstores are doing to protect the environment and how this relates to the stores' published Environmental Policy I needed be familiar with the individual company policy. The following outlines the policy for the companies in my study.

#### Information on the stores policies.

##### ASDA

ASDA has a specialist Environment Team that is continually looking at innovative ways to reduce its impact on the environment. The team covers areas as diverse as

packaging, recycling, waste management, energy and water use, through to transport and store development.

ASDA's goals are –

- Reduce consumption of energy and greenhouse gas emissions
- Zero waste to landfill by 2010
- Deliver absolute reductions in packaging weight by end of March 2010.

### Recycling

- Within Recycling they have introduced their first pilot zero waste to landfill store at Canford Heath which now diverts 70% of waste to composting.
- In 2005 they opened four purpose-built recycling facilities at a cost of £32 million enabling fleets of delivery trucks to collect cardboard and plastic packaging from the back of stores.
- Last year we recovered and recycled 140,000 metric tonnes of cardboard (8% of the UK cardboard market) and 5,500 metric tonnes of plastic packaging from store waste.
- Waste meat and fish (animal by-product waste) is rendered with the tallow extracted and sold on to soap manufacturing and the remaining product turned into pet food. The heat during the rendering process is also extracted and the energy produced converted into power and sold on to the National Grid.
- To help educate children, who in turn tell their parents that may want to get more involved ASDA teamed up with children's TV character Bob the Builder to launch the ASDA Big Recycle, highlighting how customers can recycle

cardboard packaging, glass bottles, tin cans, mobile phones, printer cartridges and old clothes.

- They also carried out environmental audits with more than 600 local schools encouraging pupils to consider how they can reduce waste and save energy in their schools by recycling paper and turning off classroom lights on sunny days.

### Packaging

There are a few key things being looked at to reduce waste packaging across the business.

- All of the products sold under the ASDA brand are being redesigned, with the aim of reducing the weight and volume of packaging by at least ten per cent.
- They have already successfully redesigned all of their salad bags reducing the thickness of the plastic by 15%.

### Energy Efficiency

ASDA has begun to sell products that are produced locally rather than importing food. This results in less carbon being emitted from the transport of goods.

ASDA has taken 4.5 million miles of road transport use of the roads by switching to using freight rail. They have introduced double-deck trailers taking further vehicles off the road along with saving 2.5 million miles of road usage each year due to the

construction of the Teesport Depot allowing 70% of ASDA's non food imports to be shipped directly in without having to transport them by road from Felixstowe.

ASDA have put in an application for permission to build a wind turbine, large enough to power 1000 homes, at the Falkirk depot.

They are building a new, more energy efficient store in Bootle, which will include wind turbines, solar panels, ground source heat pumps, timber frames and cladding, sunpipes, a biomass boiler, and efficient glass-fronted fridges.

(ASDA, 2008)

### **Marks and Spencers**

Marks and Spencers are using a five point plan. These five areas are: Climate Change, Waste, Sustainable Raw Materials, Health and being a Fair Partner.

Each pillar has its own goal. By 2012 we aim to:

- Become carbon neutral
- Send no waste to landfill
- Extend sustainable sourcing
- Help improve the lives of people in our supply chain
- Help customers and employees live a healthier life-style

I focused on the three points that are more relevant to the environment as follows -

#### Climate Change



*Think Climate – Wash at 30°C.* Informing the customer of the benefits that washing at 30°C instead of 40°C.

*The design of an Eco-Factory.* A bra manufacturing site in Sri Lanka. It uses eco-bricks, has greenery on the roof and uses the rainwater to supply the factory.

*Eco-Stores.* Savings have been made through a combination of powering the store with renewable energy, improving air tightness to minimize heat and energy loss, and installing more efficient lighting, refrigeration, heating and ventilation systems. The Pollok eco-store now uses up to 55% less energy than before the refurbishment. Meanwhile the Bournemouth store emits up to 95% less carbon dioxide than a similar sized M&S store

### Waste

Charging for carrier bags -The average person in the UK gets through 133 of them a year. Supermarkets alone give out 17 billion bags a year. From the 6<sup>th</sup> May Marks and Spencers will start to charge for carrier bags. In the first two weeks of the trial, usage was cut by over 80%, with close to £3,000 raised for Groundwork UK.

Turning food into fuel. The use of anaerobic digestion to create fuel. Biogas is produced which can then be burnt to generate electricity and heat.

### Sustainable Raw Materials

Marks and Spencers have adopted numerous sustainable methods of food production.

There is sustainable fishing, free range eggs, free range pork.

(MarksandSpencers, 2008)

### **Morrisons**

Morrisons have 3 main goals.

- Reduce its carbon footprint
- Prevent Waste
- Source responsibly

### **Reducing the carbon footprint.**

#### Energy efficiency and performance

- Reduce Carbon Footprint cumulatively by 36% by 2010 (based on 2005 emissions)
- Reduce Group energy use by 8% per square metre (sqm) by 2010 (based on 2005 emissions)
- 10% of energy from renewable sources by 2010
- Air-freighted produce to be labelled for customer choice/information
- Carbon labelling to be explored

#### Refrigeration management

- Replace Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) with Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by 2010
- Trial CO2 system

#### Water conservation

- 15% reduction in Group water use by 2010

### Transport efficiency

- Plan to save 8% of our haulage CO2 emissions by 2010 (based on 2005 emissions) through mileage reductions and increased efficiencies
- Reduce road miles travelled per pallet of stock by 6% by 2010 and achieve an 8% reduction of total empty road miles travelled
- Enhance transport planning systems to achieve a 10% increase in trailer utilisation by 2010
- Introduce cleaner Euro5 engines to 15% of fleet by end 2007 and 80% of fleet by 2010.
- Extend availability of BioEthanol E85 fuel on forecourts

### **Prevent waste**

#### Optimisation

- Volume of waste to landfill reduced by 50% by 2010

#### Reduction

- Use 15% less own brand packaging by 2010
- Reduce environmental impact of standard plastic carrier bag use by 25% by end 2008

#### Reuse

- Extend returnable tray trips by 14m by 2008. Grow future use in line with sales

#### Recycling

- Increase the proportion of recycled available store waste from 72% to 80% by 2010
- Extend compostable packaging to 200 lines by end 2007
- Increase the opportunities for customers to recycle at and through our stores

- Start to introduce symbols on our packaging to make it easier for customers to recycle
- Increase recycled content of standard plastic carrier bags to 25% by end 2008 and 50% by 2010

### **Source responsibly**

#### Responsible sourcing

- Use only timber which is recycled or certified as coming from a sustainable source by 2010,
- principles/policies

Including 100% of wood derived marketing materials.

- 100% of own brand tissue paper lines to be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) by end 2007
- 100% of own brand fish to comply with sustainable sourcing policy by 2010
- 100% of own brand shell eggs to be free range by 2010

Good choice of organic, Fair Trade, local and in-season food

- Increase the range of organic foods available by 40% by end 2007
- Label all produce with country/place of origin
- Foster responsible methods of agriculture and biodiversity

(Morrisons, 2008)

### **Sainsbury's**

Sainsbury's have also introduced the restriction of the free bags at checkouts to encourage people to use fewer bags and encourage them to use bags for life.

By September 2008, 20% of online deliveries will be made using electric vans, saving 45 tones of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the first year Sainsburys have also set up a scheme to recycle or reuse other items that are not commonly recycled, old batteries, as well as

mobile phones and inkjet printer cartridges, expected to save 5 tones of batteries going to landfill every year.

Sainsburys are honest and state that environmental issues will never replace the importance of providing the right product at the right price. They do also acknowledge that the ability to deliver changes is dependant on understanding.

(Sainsburys, 2008)

## **Tesco**

Tesco are focusing on

- Greener packaging
- Cutting down on carrier bag use
- Cutting down on waste
- Reducing amount of energy usage
- Making products more sustainable.

### Greener Packaging

Tesco aims to reduce packaging on both own-label and branded goods by 25% by 2010. Tesco have been working with WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme). WRAP helps businesses and consumers be more efficient and conducts case studies with businesses to help optimise processes.

Cutting down on carrier bag use.

Tesco are clearly trying to engage the customers in protecting the environment. Instead of doing like other stores and charging customers they are offering customers

clubcard (reward points) points for bringing their own bags whether they be normal bags or bags for life. Tesco has also introduced bag less deliveries for internet orders, as an initiative for customers to use the bag less option they are given a green clubcard point for every 10 items.

Cutting down on waste.

Tesco recycle between 70% - 80% of its waste. Tesco have been aiming to make recycling easier for customers, introducing more recycling bins at stores and are currently receiving 13% of all recycling by local authorities. Tesco is working towards developing ways to use what is being recycled in their packaging.

### Reducing Energy Use

Tesco aim to half the amount of energy consumption from 2000 to 2010. On their new store they have built 5 wind turbines to generate energy for the store.

Tesco use their own train to transport goods between its main depots, carrying the same as 28 Lorries and saving over 14,560 lorry journeys every year.

Tesco are turning back time using the existing canals to use barges to transport wine from Liverpool to Manchester, along the famous Manchester Ship Canal, slashing carbon emissions by around 80%.

Tesco are not just blowing their own trumpet, they are really committed to helping the environment and with this inform what other companies are doing to protect the environment.

What are other brands doing?

- B&Q is making it easier and more affordable to insulate your home with lower prices and free advice.
- Barclaycard Breathe is a new credit card that rewards you when you make green purchases. Also, 50% of all profits from the card go to projects that help to tackle climate change.
- British Gas now offers the greenest electricity in the country and offer free home energy surveys that could help you save ½ a tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> a year.
- M&S is encouraging you to wash your clothes at 30°C and have relabelled their clothing range to remind you.
- O2 has launched new SIM only tariffs to encourage you to not to take a new handset if you don't have to. They're also encouraging their customers to not upgrade their handset when renewing their contract.
- More Than offers eco insurance policies with a 30% discount for eco friendlier cars.
- Sky is making it easier for you to save energy as new Sky+ and Sky HD boxes now automatically switch to standby when they are not being used.

It's easier to deal with climate change if we do it together.

(Tesco, 2008)

## Consumer Questionnaire Results

1) Which of these do you shop at most regularly?

16	Asda
5	Marks and Spencers
11	Morrisons
7	Sainsburys
13	Tesco
8	other (please state)

Table 1

2) Are you aware of any measures the store is taking to reduce its impact on the environment.

	Asda	M & S	Morrisons	Sainsburys	Tesco	Other
yes	10	5	5	6	8	5
no	6	0	6	1	5	3

Table 2

3) If yes, how were you made aware of the stores measures?

	Asda	M & S	Morrisons	Sainsburys	Tesco
Instore Posters	3	5	2	7	5
Leaflets	2	5	0	7	2
TV Adverts	1	5	4	1	2
Internet	4	3	0	2	1
other	1	2	0	0	2

Table 3

4) What measures are you aware of that the store is promoting?

	Asda	M & S	Morrisons	Sainsburys	Tesco
Bags for life	6	5	2	5	4
Recycling household waste	0	1	0	0	0
Recycling clothes	2	3	0	3	2
Switch to 30°	3	2	1	2	1
Wider Issues	4	3	2	3	1

Table 5

6) Where do you consider to be the best place for the store to advertise its measures to minimise environmental impact?

	Asda	M & S	Morrisons	Sainsburys	Tesco	Other
Instore Posters	12	5	8	7	8	5
Leaflets	7	3	2	4	2	1
TV Adverts	5	5	5	5	6	5
Internet	3	2	1	4	2	2
other	2	2	1	3	2	0

Table 6



7) Do you think that what the stores is doing is having a positive impact on the environment?

	Asda	M & S	Morrisons	Sainsburys	Tesco	Other
Yes	2	2	3	2	3	4
No	2	0	2	0	0	0
Possibly	5	2	2	3	3	1
Unable to comment	7	1	4	2	7	3

Table 7

8) Would greater involvement to minimise the environmental impact of a store influence whether you shop there or not?

	Asda	M & S	Morrisons	Sainsburys	Tesco	Other
Yes	5	2	3	2	4	2
No	11	3	8	5	9	6

Table 8

9) Do you think retailers are doing enough to protect the environment?

	Asda	M & S	Morrisons	Sainsburys	Tesco	Other
Enough	2	1	0	2	2	2
Not enough	9	2	5	3	5	2
As much as can be expected	5	2	6	3	6	2

Table 9

## Store survey results

### Store 1

1) Which store? Asda, Accrington

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)  
Large store. In a very built up area. Selling food, clothes and some electricals.

3) Evidence of Environmental Policies and practices.

Bags for life. Bag dispensers to put customers off bag use. Not much more.

4) What is advertised clearly?

Credit cards, all kinds of insurance. Bureau de Change. ISAs

### Store 2

1) Which store? Asda, Preston

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)  
Large store. On an industrial estate, built up areas very close, relatively close to town centre. Selling food, clothes, electricals, majority of Asda products.

3) Evidence of environmental policies and practices.

Very little evidence of environmental policies.

4) What is advertised clearly?

Credit cards, all kinds of insurance. Bureau de Change. ISAs

### Store 3

1) Which store? Marks and Spencers, Preston

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)  
Large M&S store. In town centre. Large clothing focus, home wear relatively large food for M&S but small in comparison to other stores in survey.

3) Evidence of Environmental Policies and practices.

mannequin display for bags for life. Lots of information on bags for life clothes recycling with Oxfam. Fair trade food.

4) What is advertised clearly?

Plan A, Bags for life. Credit card. Insurance.

### Store 4

1) Which store? Marks and Spencers, Blackburn.

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)  
Medium size store. In town centre. More focus on clothes. Medium sized food section, small in comparison to other companies.

3) Evidence of Environmental Policies and practices.

Small display on bags for life, toblerone on bags for life.

information at tills for bags for life. Plan A signs.

4) What is advertised clearly? Plan A, Bags for life. Credit card. Insurance.

Store 5

1) Which store? Morrisons, Preston

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)

Large store. At riversway. Surrounded by other large stores. Selling mainly food with some electrical products.

3) Evidence of Environmental Policies and practices.

Few bags for life. Very little advertisement.

4) What is advertised clearly? 2 for 1 deal, magazines, sweets.

Store 6

1) Which store? Morrisons, Blackburn

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)

Large store. In town centre. Selling mainly food with small electrical section.

3) Evidence of Environmental Policies and practices.

Few bags for life. Very little advertisement.

4) What is advertised clearly? 2 for 1 deal. Magazines.

Store 7

1) Which store? Sainsburys, Preston

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)

Large store. In a built up area. Near a local landmark. Selling food and clothing.

3) Evidence of Environmental Policies and practices.

information about bags for life clearly shown at tills. Fair trade food.

4) What is advertised clearly? Bags for life, Insurance, sweets. Feed the family for £5

Store 8

1) Which store? Sainsburys, Darwen.

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)

Large store. In a built up area. Near town centre. Selling food and clothing.

3) Evidence of Environmental Policies and practices.

Information about bags for life clearly shown at tills. Some other information but not vast amounts. fair trade food

4) What is advertised clearly? Bags for life, Insurance, Feed the family for £5

clearly?

sweets.

Store 9

1) Which store? Tesco, Blackburn

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)  
Large store. In a built up area. Near town centre. Selling food and clothing.

3) Evidence of Environmental Policies and practices.  
very little information clearly available. Bags for life. Fair trade food

4) What is advertised clearly?  
insurance, ISAs, clubcard, bags for life.

Store 10

1) Which store? Tesco Burnley.

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)  
Large store. New store. In a built up area. Selling food and clothing.

3) Evidence of Environmental Policies and practices.  
some information at tills. Bags for life. Little in other displays. Fair trade food.

4) What is advertised clearly?  
insurance, ISAs, clubcard, bags for life.

	Asda		M and S		Morrisons		Sainsburys		Tesco	
	Store 1	Store 2	Store 3	Store 4	Store 5	Store 6	Store 7	Store 8	Store 9	Store 10
5) Approximate amount of advertisement of environmental policy to customers (rate)	1	1	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	3
6) Approximate percentage of environmental adverts compared to others	4%	4%	25%	30%	10%	8%	15%	20%	40%	30%
7) Advertisement of further info/website in the store.(yes/no)	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes

Table 10

Website survey results

<b>Asda</b>	<b>M &amp; S</b>	<b>Morrisons</b>	<b>Sainsburys</b>	<b>Tesco</b>
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1) How easy is it to find the links to the Environmental Policy?

Easy		X			X
Moderate	X				
Hard			X	X	

Table  
11

2) Where is the link placed?

clearly, large and attractive.		X			X
moderate, visible direct link	X				
hard, small no direct link			X	X	

Table  
12

3) Clarity of what the policies are.

Clear	X	X			X
Moderate			X		
Unclear				X	

Table  
13

4) How understandable is the information for the general public?

Good	X	X	X		X
Adequate				X	
Inappropriate					

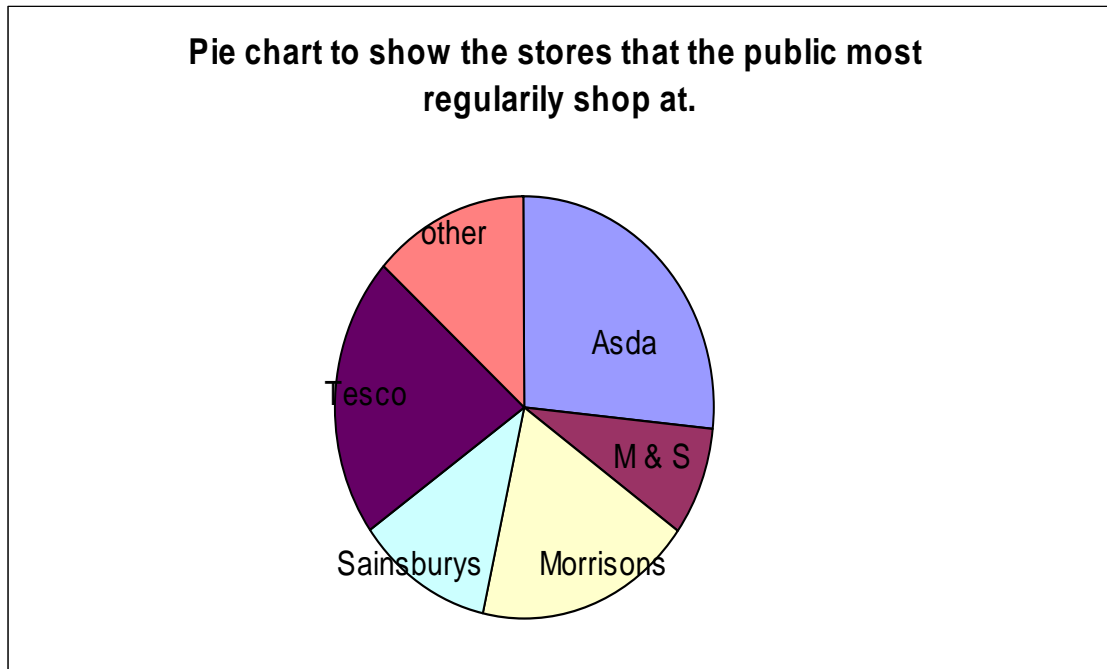
Table  
14

5) Does it tell people how they can get involved?

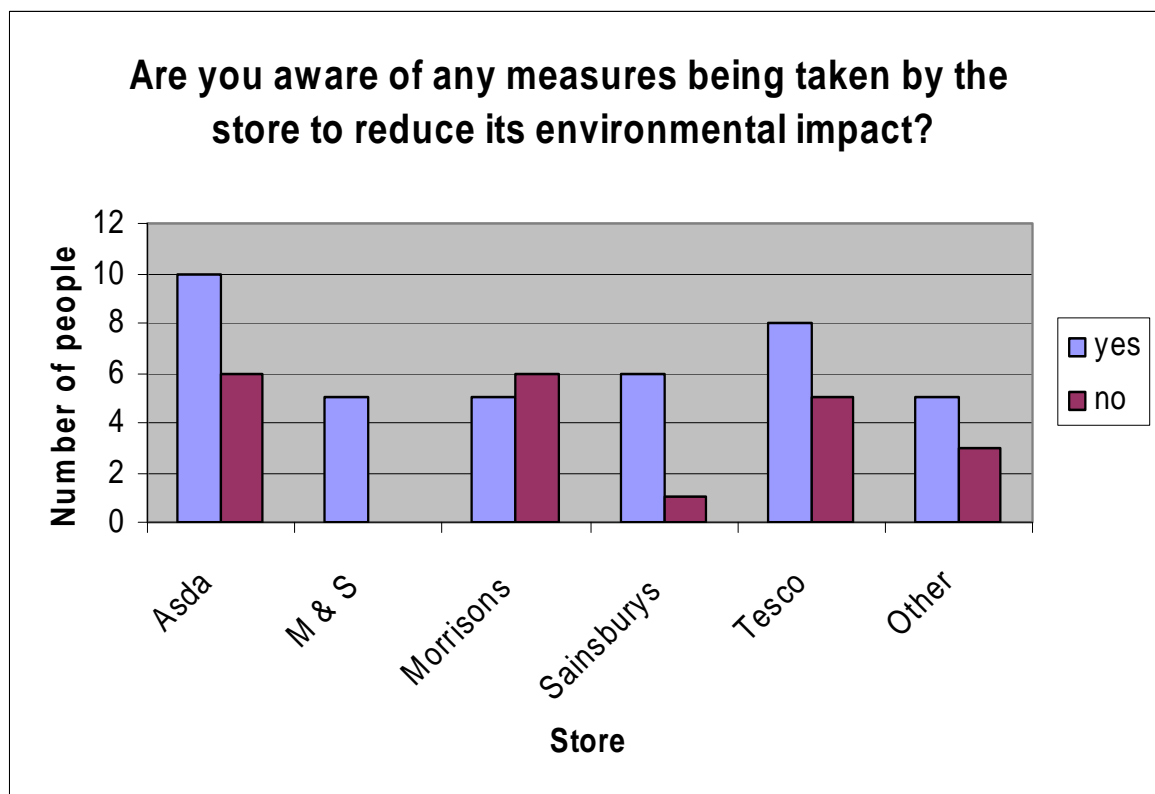
Yes	X	X			X
No			X	X	

Table  
15

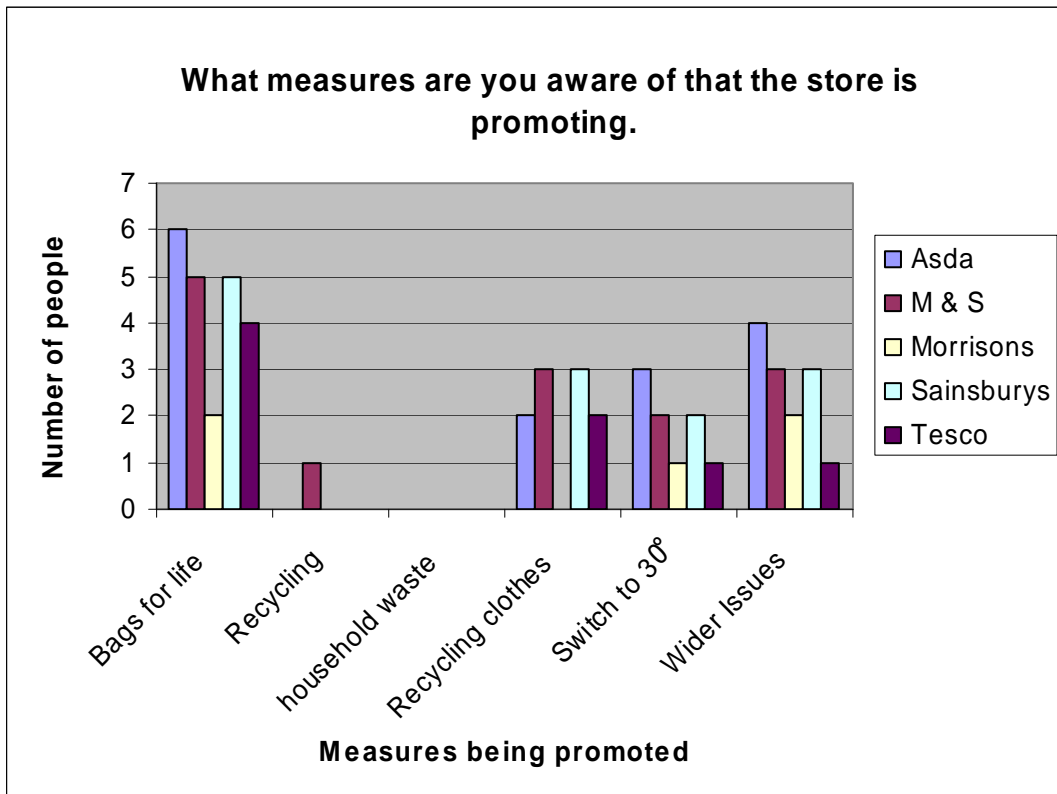
Graphical representation of consumer questionnaire results



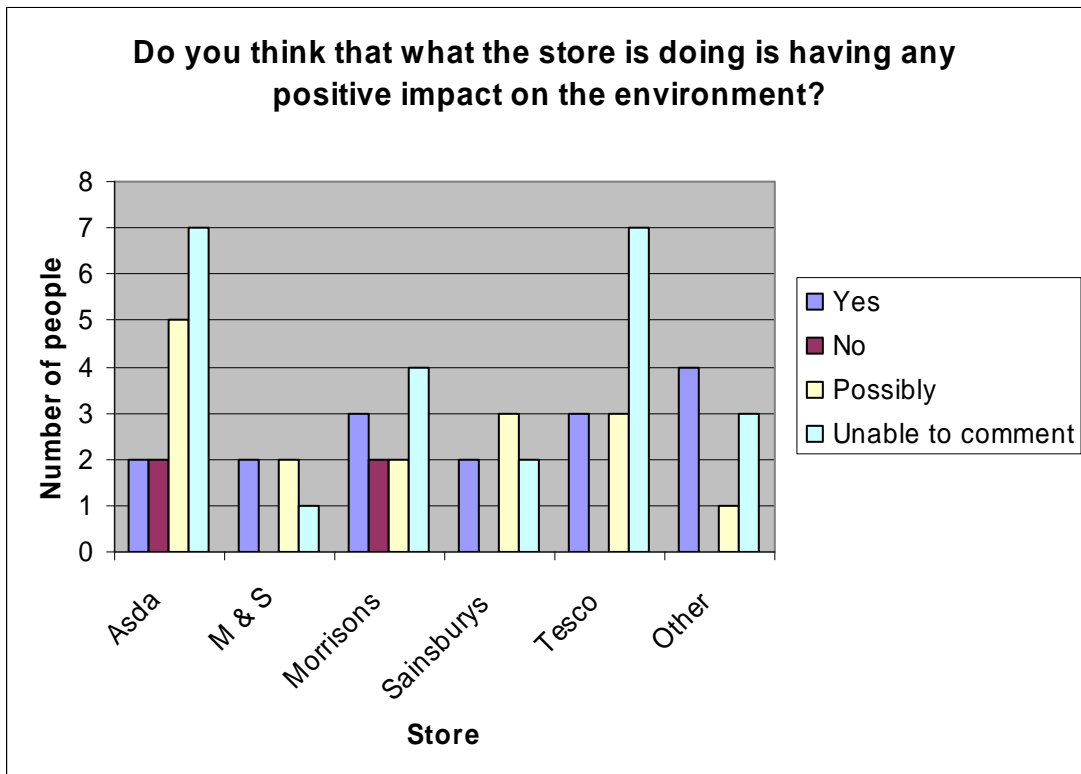
Graph 1



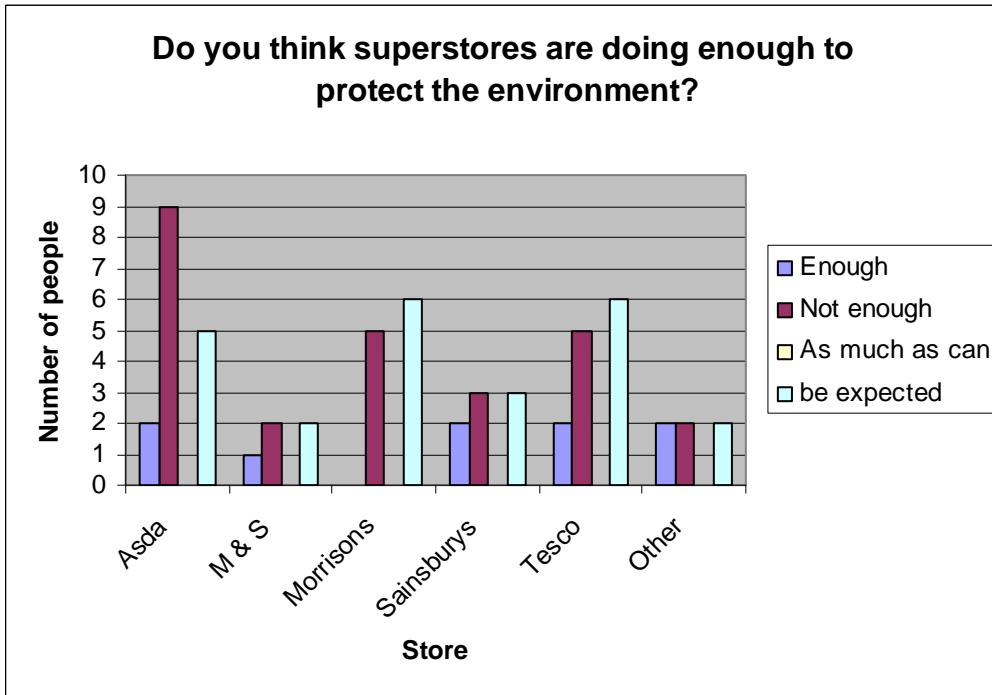
Graph 2



Graph 3

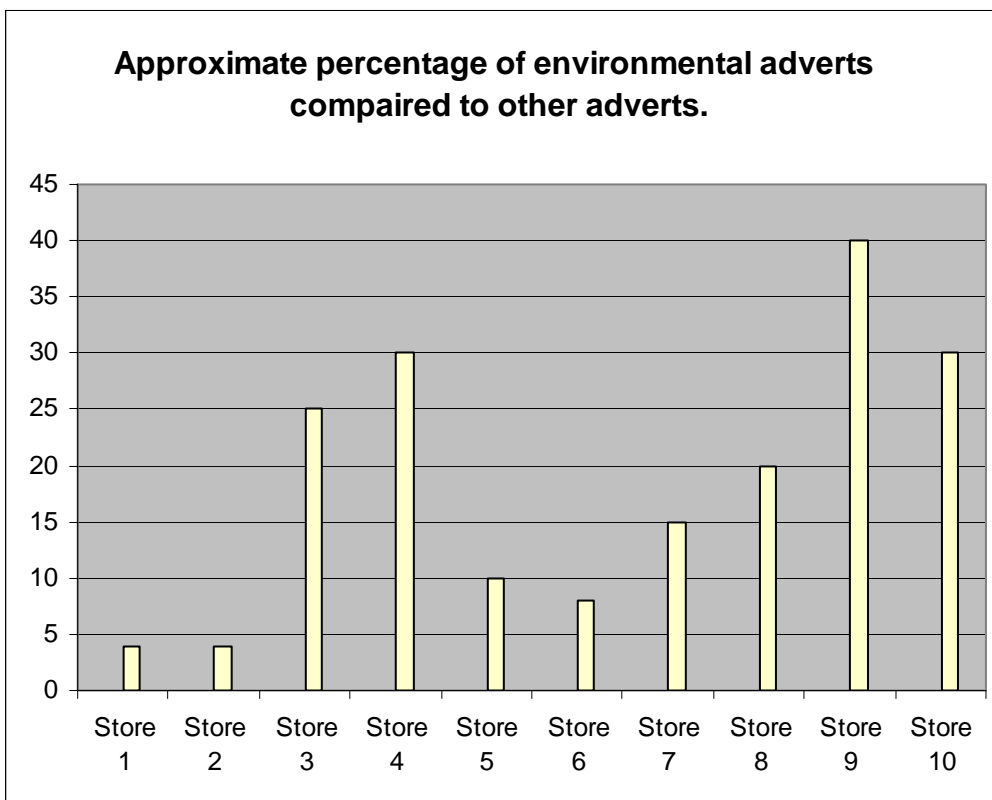


Graph 4



Graph 5

Graphical representation of store survey.



Graph 6





Graph 7

## **Interpretation**

### *Customer Questionnaire.*

It would seem that few of the environmental policies that superstores are trying to implement are getting across to the customers. From the knowledge gained from looking at the superstores web pages there are many more ways that the store are trying to help protect the environment. Customers may not be aware of these policies as they may not know the information is on the internet or they may not have the internet access, or they may only be taking an interest in the policies that they can personally get involved in or that have an impact on them. The most known about measure is 'bags for life'. Graph 3 and table 5 show the measures that stores are trying to promote that the public are aware of. This graph clearly shows which of the measures are most widely known. Bags for life are clearly the most common with all 5 stores showing the highest number of people for this criteria. It does show that recycling of household waste at stores is the measure that people are least aware of with only one store scoring anything. The other issues are quite closely matched in awareness across all stores. 'Bags for life' may be the measure known the most as they have been at many stores till points for a number of years. The recent media interest in the removal of free food bags from Marks and Spencers may have increased consumer awareness of this again, Many of the superstores are getting famous designers to design the bags or models to appear on the bags and help promote the 'bags for life'. The 'switch to 30°C' measure may have become more widely know from television adverts for a product, e.g. Persil rather than the stores. Graph 3 clearly shows a visual representation of the information found in table 5.

From Graphs 4 and 5 I can see that people, who felt they could comment, do think that what the stores are trying to do is having a positive impact but that more could be

done. This could be because the customers do not know about the other initiatives that are not being advertised in store or possibly because they think that the superstores could genuinely be doing more, this may just be a case of needing to educate the public about other initiatives through advertising more widely. The customers were asked where they would consider being the best place for the companies to promote their environmental policies.

Table 6 shows in-store posters to be the method most consumers though was effective. Another method that scored highly was T.V. advertising. This could be because the customer could get the information easily with minimum hassle to themselves, it may also be beneficial as it will not just be a visual stimulant but there may also be verbal information.

Graph 7 shows that approximately two-thirds of the people sampled were not influenced enough by stores Environmental Policies to change their shopping habits. This may be because of a lack of knowledge, by the public, of the policies and the benefits that they may bring. It may also be because many people become comfortable with where they shop, they know the products and the lay out of the store. I also think it may be found that many people prefer to use the store within close proximity to their home for ease and convenience.

#### *Store Survey*

With all of the stores surveyed I found that there was much more of a focus on advertising products that would make the store money fast. The products advertised in the prime locations were more for insurance and, the big money maker for many companies, credit cards. At nearly all of the stores the only evidence of environmental concern was shown through the 'bags for life' that are on sale. The difference between the stores however was the additional promotional material that came

alongside the bags. Marks and Spencers and Tesco's displays were much more eye catching and interesting. It would seem that the other stores presume most people would know about the 'bags for life' and their benefits and neglect to give any additional information. Question 6 in table 10 shows the percentage of the advertisement dedicated to environmental matters compared to advertisement of other products at the till points. Graph 6 shows that both the Tesco stores and the Marks and Spencers stores are the highest rated. Both of these were also the higher rated stores from question 5 in table 10. The stores may have chosen to display relatively small amounts of environmental information as making money is their main goal and more immediate results would come from selling insurance and credit cards than initially investing money in the environment to eventually see long term benefits both financially, with reduced bills etc, and the environmental improvements. Question 7 from table 10 showed that only half of the stores surveyed had the environmental website address displayed in store or on a carrier bag. For the public to be aware of the superstores policies and to allow them to easily access information the website should be clearly displayed, especially as I was told by stores that this is where to get all of the information about their policies.

#### *Website Survey.*

The website survey was to show how accessible the websites were as these are the main point of call for the superstores to get its message across to the public. I found that the scoring for each store remained constant, if it scored well in one it did trough out and the same with the poor scores. I also found that the stores that scored high on the website survey were the ones that scored best on the store survey also. This may indicate that these superstores take their environmental responsibility seriously.

### *Evaluation*

I had to narrow my field of superstores down to just the 5 largest, I chose to do this as in the area selected to conduct the survey there were few of the other major superstores. I also chose these stores as they were all of a relatively similar shop floor size and offering much the same products. I had to limit the size of my survey to East Lancashire and Preston for geographical ease. Having only looked into the 5 superstores selected I had to disregard the majority of the information given by customers that shopped at any of the other stores. By giving the options for what measures are you aware of, some people may have felt compelled to tick a box that they may not necessarily know any real facts about to conform to ideals and what they think I would be looking for. The answers that are more subjective have not been thoroughly analysed, more of a focus has been put on the objective answers. Some of the questions were restrictive in the answer and may not have given the full view of the customer. The presence of me while the customer was filling the questionnaire in may have had benefits in the way that if there were any queries I was there to answer them, it allowed me to slightly control my selection of participants, but it may have made some participants uncomfortable.

The store survey is a subjective collection of data. The surveys were moderated as they were all completed by the same person. This also meant that the views are of just one person and therefore cannot be presumed to represent everybody. There are no definite results from the store survey and therefore could not be analysed statistically. Only two stores were surveyed from each superstore chain. Both of the stores surveyed were within a 25mile distance of each other. The questions are quite general,

more specific questions about what measures the store is doing and how effective the information on them is.

The website survey was very short giving very little detail of what the stores are trying to achieve. The amount of information given on the websites may have been assessed, too much information can be as bad as too little. Once again the website survey is subjective and is only one person's view and so cannot be generalised. As each superstore only has one website there was very little data that could be compared. The use of the website does however give the view of the corporate position on their environmental policies and therefore may be more representative.

The survey is very concise and does not give much room for expansion. The wording of some of the questions is not clear and if any other person was to come in and try to complete it they may struggle with understanding what is being asked.

## **Conclusion.**

I set out to answer the following question –

How does public perception of what the major UK superstores are doing to protect the environment relate to the stores' published Environmental Policies?

From my research I have found that the majority of people do not know many of the superstores environmental policies. I have noticed that the measures that are being publicised in the media and small displays in the stores like 'bags for life' are being noticed by the customers. In the comparison of what the public know of the stores environmental policies and what I have found out about each of their policies there are large discrepancies. The majority of the stores have five or six main areas of environmental focus each outlining a number of actions that the store is taking in an effort to reduce their negative impact upon the environment. The superstores have published this material, mainly on the internet, but the message does not seem to be reaching the general public.

The methods used, although adequate for this initial research, did fall short because –

- The customer questionnaire had to be kept short to keep the customer engaged and not require too much of their time.
- The in-store and internet surveys were only carried out by me this gave only one view and therefore could not be used to represent the general population.
- The sample area for the questionnaire and the store survey was relatively small and so could not presume to be a representation of the whole of Britain.
- The Questionnaire was too broad; it needs to focus in on one area of the policies. There was too much information being gathered that needed to be looked at thoroughly.

- The knowledge that the customers did have may not have necessarily come from that superstore. It could have come from other stores or from other sources such as the media.
- Not all the questions could produce a reliable result as the customers were unable to answer properly.
- The questionnaire is very leading and may have caused the customer to answer the way they thought I would want them to.
- There was no measurement of how much the customer knew about the measures being taken, just if they knew that they were occurring.

To combat these problems I could

- Give the customer opportunity to take the questionnaire and fill it in at their own pace when they have enough time.
- I could ask the general public what they think of the websites and the in-store displays, showing them examples to rate.
- I could do a much larger survey covering all of the North- West or possibly England as a whole.
- I could chose one aspect and focus all of the research on that topic.
- I could ask customers where they have obtained their knowledge from.
- I could ask the customer to explain what they know or ask them rate the amount of information they feel they know.

### *Limitations*

A limitation of the research was that I could only use the information made available to me by the superstores. The public also limited my research as many people were



unwilling to fill in the questionnaire. I was limited by the size of the sample that was used; I would need more data to do a reliable analysis. My analysis was also limited by the initial research question being too big, I could only make assumptions I had no clear evidence.

#### *Further study*

If I was to repeat this study I would possibly use a larger area, this would in itself arise other problems but it would give a more accurate view of what is occurring in all superstores. I would survey more stores in more distant locations around Britain. I would also do more questionnaires and perhaps use more questions towards that of gender and age to see if these factors made any difference into their views. I would conduct questionnaires that are more representative of the nation and send the questionnaires out all over England. I could perhaps choose two areas of England and compare these to see if there are any differences. I could work with just one store to see if the advertising campaigns they do are successful at getting the environmental message across or are consumers only interested in the material offers. I could see whether the initiatives are working look at data from audits done before the environmental initiatives were put into place, I could monitor the progress over a few years and try to predict what potentially could happen.

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<sup>1</sup>Yale Journal identifies products that cause greatest environmental damage.

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<sup>2</sup>The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution. <http://www.rcep.org.uk/>.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaires

Consumer Questionnaire.

I am a student from the University of Central Lancashire doing a BSc Geography degree. I am conducting this questionnaire as part of my 3rd year dissertation. I am looking at the public's perception of whether they think the major U.K. superstores are doing enough to protect the environment. I would be grateful if I could have just a few minutes of your time to get your opinion on this matter. Many thanks. Amy Jackson.

1) Which of these do you shop at most regularly?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Asda
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marks and Spencers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Morrisons
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sainsburys
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tesco
	other (please state) _____

Please answer the following with reference to the store you have selected above.

2) Are you aware of any measures the store is taking to reduce its impact on the environment?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

If no please go to question 5.

3) If yes, how were you made aware of the store's measures?

<input type="checkbox"/>	In store Posters
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leaflets
<input type="checkbox"/>	TV Adverts
<input type="checkbox"/>	Internet
	other (please state) _____

4) What measures are you aware of that the store is promoting?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Bags for life
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recycling household waste
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recycling clothes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Switch to 30°
	Wider Issues (give details) _____

5) What else would you like to see the store doing?

*Please state.*

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6) Where do you consider to be the best place for the store to advertise its measures to minimise environmental impact?

<input type="checkbox"/>	In store Posters
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leaflets
<input type="checkbox"/>	TV Adverts
<input type="checkbox"/>	Internet
	other (please state) _____

7) Do you think that what the stores is doing is having a positive impact on the environment?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Possibly
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unable to comment

8) Would greater involvement to minimise the environmental impact of a store influence whether you shopped there or not?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

9) Do you think retailers are doing enough to protect the environment?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Enough
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not enough
<input type="checkbox"/>	As much as can be expected at the moment.

Do you wish to add any further comments?

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Store Survey

1) Which store? \_\_\_\_\_

2) Brief description of store. (Size, location, type of products being sold.)

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---

---

3) Evidence of environmental policies and practices.

---

---

4) What is advertised clearly

---

5) Approximate amount of advertisement of environmental policy to customers (rate)

	0
	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

6) Approximate percentage of environmental adverts compared to others

---

7) Advertisement of further info/website in the store.

	yes
	no

8) Any further important points.

---



Website Survey.

1) How easy is it to find the links to the Environmental Policy?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Easy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hard

2) How is the link displayed?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Clearly, large and attractive.
<input type="checkbox"/>	moderate, visible direct link
<input type="checkbox"/>	hard, small no direct link

Details \_\_\_\_\_

3) Clarity of what the policies are.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear

4) How understandable is the information for the general public?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Good
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inappropriate

5) Does it tell people how they can get involved?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

6) Is there a comments/ Questions and answer section?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Comments on the website.

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Appendix 2

Risk Assessment

## School of Natural Resources

### RISK ASSESSMENT FORM (Dissertation)

1	Assessor: Amy Jackson	Date: 24 <sup>th</sup> August
	Project Title: How does public perception of what the major UK superstores are doing to protect the environment relate to the stores' published Environmental Policies?	Supervisor:
2	Brief Description of Task / Process or Aims of Project	
	<p>To look at the environmental policies of U.K. based major retailers. To see if their initiatives are affective and bold enough to reduce environmental damage. What the public's opinion of environmental damage and to see if they know what retailers are promoting in their environmental policies. To see if what retailers are doing has any affect on the consumer's opinion of the store.</p>	
3	Hazards/Risks which could result in significant harm:	H/M/L Priority
	Have to conduct the survey on the general public, the may not wish to be disturbed.	L
	Have to conduct the research in a public area.	L
	Will need opinions from different types of shopper (city centre, retail park, supermarket) all of these are near busy roads and car parks, Deepdale retail park has very little path way for the organisation of the shops.	L
	Stopping customers may cause a hazard as will block an easy walk way.	L
4	Those persons at risk (state how many of each):	
	<p>Amy Jackson, the researcher. The general public that have consented to stop and take part in the research.</p>	
5	Current control measures (state where detailed information is kept):	
6	If current controls are not adequate, further protective and preventive measures necessary:	
	<p>Have a mobile phone on my person all the time in case of emergency. Keep well on the path ways.</p>	

Keep out of the way of busy areas. Keep out of busy pathways when conducting the questionnaire. Be polite to the public, do not hassle them, and allow them to walk away. Keep people informed of where I am and how long I will be out for.		
Assessor's Name:	Signed:	Date:
Supervisor' Name:	Signed:	Date:
Head of School / nominee: Name:	Signed:	Date:

Appendix 3

Ethics Form

**School of Natural Resources (Preston)**

**APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF AN UNDERGRADUATE  
RESEARCH PROJECT**

**Title of Project**    How does public perception of the what major UK superstores are  
\_\_\_\_\_ doing to protect the environment relate to the stores' published  
\_\_\_\_\_ Environmental Policies.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Researcher**    **Amy Jackson**  
(please print)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Degree / Course**        **Bsc Geography**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Email address**         **Jamy\_piglet@hotmail.com**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number**         **01254 301495**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Supervisor**    \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Has supervision been agreed?**                    Y / N

**External Collaborating Institution(s) or Department (s):**  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has approval been given by the Ethics Committee of the collaborating institution?  
Yes/ No            (If possible, please attach a copy of the relevant documentation  
relating to external approval)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Aims of project and key methods/experimental systems to be used:**

To look at the environmental policies of U.K. based major retailers. To see if their initiatives are affective and bold enough to reduce environmental damage. What the public's opinion of environmental damage and to see if they know what retailers are promoting in their environmental policies. To see if what retailers are doing has any affect on the consumer's opinion of the store.

I will write to the retail companies for a full break down of their environmental policies. I will use the publicised material from the companies. I will conduct a questionnaire with the general public to find their opinions.

**Have you identified any ethical issues relating to this research project?**

Yes

**Summarise any ethical issues identified:**

The use of the general public's opinions.

The companies may not wish to be studied.

**List any feasible alternative methods or systems which would avoid the ethical issues:**

Get the public's consent and keep the questionnaire anonymous, make sure the person knows this.

Write to the companies asking for their policies and stating what it will be used for.

Just use the publicised material.

**Field work:**

What species and habitats are involved in the study?

Humans

Do you have permission from land-owners or English Nature for the work?

n/a

Are there any potential effects in the environment or ecosystems?

n/a

Researcher's signature		Date	
Assessed by (supervisor):		Date	
Approved by (Head of School or Nominee)		Date	

