



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Eco label and Product Promotion: The case of Portuguese
Canned Fish in Japan.

Mariana Barbosa de Moura Vieira

Católica Porto Business School

2025



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Eco label and Product Promotion: the case of Portuguese
Canned Fish in Japan.

Master's Final Work presented to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to fulfill the
requirements for the degree of master's in marketing.

by

Mariana Barbosa de Moura Vieira

under the guidance of

Professor Doctor Ricardo Morais

Católica Porto Business School, Universidade Católica Portuguesa

July, 2025.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my mother, whose unwavering support and encouragement have guided me throughout this journey. To my grandparents, who have always believed in my potential and inspired me with their wisdom. A heartfelt thanks to my friends, who provided both motivation and much-needed moments of levity during this demanding process.

A special mention goes to my cat, whose quiet companionship made the long nights of writing feel a little less lonely.

I would also like to thank my professors and my supervisor, whose guidance, patience, and invaluable feedback were fundamental in shaping this thesis. Your insights and dedication have been a constant source of inspiration.

Completing this thesis while juggling an internship has been one of the most challenging experiences of my life, but it has taught me the value of perseverance and dedication.

It always seems impossible until it's done.

Nelson Mandela

Abstract

As global environmental concerns gain prominence, eco-labeling has emerged as a crucial strategy for promoting sustainable consumption. This study investigates ANICP's approach to promoting Portuguese canned fish in the Japanese market through the integration of eco-labels as a product promotion tool. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of eco-labels in enhancing product differentiation, consumer trust, and brand value in international markets.

This study adopts case study as its research strategy, combining semi-structured interviews with ANICP representatives and industry experts alongside secondary data analysis. This study highlights the pivotal role of eco-label certifications, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), in communicating sustainability attributes to environmentally conscious consumers. The findings suggest that eco-labels improve brand perception and act as a key determinant in purchasing decisions.

This study also identifies several challenges in implementing eco-labeling strategies, including high certification costs, consumer skepticism, and fragmented international certification standards. Moreover, cultural differences and varying levels of environmental awareness present additional obstacles when targeting foreign markets.

The research develops a theoretical framework that positions consumer trust as mediator between eco-labels and product promotion, emphasizing the need for educational campaigns and strategic partnerships to maximize the impact of sustainability certifications.

Keywords: Eco-labeling; Product Promotion; Case Study; Portuguese Canned Fish; Japan.

(9013 words)

Resumo

À medida que as preocupações ambientais globais ganham destaque, a eco etiquetagem emergiu como uma estratégia crucial para promover o consumo sustentável. Esta dissertação investiga a abordagem da ANICP para promover o peixe enlatado português no mercado japonês por meio da integração de eco etiquetas como ferramenta de promoção de produtos. O estudo visa avaliar a eficácia da eco etiquetas no aprimoramento da diferenciação do produto, da confiança do consumidor e do valor da marca nos mercados internacionais. Adotando uma metodologia de pesquisa qualitativa, o estudo combina entrevistas semiestruturadas com representantes da ANICP e especialistas da indústria, além da análise de dados secundários.

A pesquisa destaca o papel fundamental das certificações de eco etiquetas, como o Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) e o Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), na comunicação dos atributos de sustentabilidade para consumidores ambientalmente conscientes. Os resultados sugerem que as ecos etiquetas não apenas melhoram a percepção da marca, mas também atuam como um fator determinante nas decisões de compra, especialmente em mercados como o Japão, onde a conscientização sobre sustentabilidade está crescendo rapidamente. Apesar de seus benefícios, o estudo identifica vários desafios na implementação de estratégias de eco etiquetagem, incluindo altos custos de certificação, ceticismo do consumidor e padrões internacionais de certificação fragmentados.

Além disso, as diferenças culturais e os níveis variados de conscientização ambiental apresentam obstáculos adicionais ao se direcionar para mercados estrangeiros. A pesquisa desenvolve uma estrutura teórica que posiciona as ecos etiquetas como mediadoras entre a promoção do produto e a confiança do consumidor, enfatizando a necessidade de campanhas educativas e parcerias estratégicas para maximizar o impacto das certificações de sustentabilidade.

Palavras-chave: Eco etiquetagem; Promoção de Produtos; Estudo de Caso; Conservas de Peixe Portuguesas; Japão.

(9013 palavras)

Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	7
<i>Resumo</i>	9
<i>Abbreviations</i>	13
<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Chapter 1</i>	3
<i>1. Literature Review</i>	3
<i>1.1. Eco- labeling</i>	3
<i>1.2. Product promotion</i>	5
<i>Chapter 2</i>	6
<i>2. Methodology</i>	6
<i>2.1. Research Strategy</i>	6
<i>Chapter 3</i>	9
<i>Case</i>	9
<i>3.1. ANICP</i>	9
<i>Chapter 4</i>	10
<i>4. Discussion</i>	10
<i>Chapter 5</i>	14
<i>5.1. Conclusions</i>	14
<i>5.1. Final Theoretical framework</i>	14
<i>5.2. Limitations</i>	16
<i>5.3. Suggestions for Future Research</i>	17

5.4. Practical Implications	18
<i>References</i>	20
<i>Appendix 7:</i>	36
<i>Interview transcript</i>	36

Abbreviations

ANICP – Associação Nacional dos Industriais de Conservas de Peixe

MSC – Marine Stewardship Council

ASC – Aquaculture Stewardship Council

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

FOS – Friend of the Sea

FMCG – Fast-Moving Consumer Goods

EU – European Union

ISO – International Organization for Standardization

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

Introduction

Sustainability has become a major topic of interest for most industries. Some have grown to be sustainable while consumers look for more ethically produced products (Bratt et al., 2011; Delmas & Grant, 2010). The use of eco-labels is one approach that can be adopted to address these problems, by educating consumers on the environmental and social impacts of the products they buy (Bratt et al., 2011).

Eco-labels help customers make more informed purchases by showing the environmental footprint of a product (Camilleri et al., 2023). As Japan is among the world leaders in seafood consumption and is growing more concerned about the environment. The Portuguese canned fish industry must thus bridge this knowledge gap if it is to be effective in exporting to this nation (Houf, Szymkowiak, & Shepherd, 2024).

The research question of this study is therefore: How eco-label influences product promotion? To answer this question this study focuses on the case of Portuguese canned fish promotion in Japan, namely through ANICP (Associação Nacional das Indústrias de Conservas de Peixe).

This thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 1 provides the background and significance of the study. Chapter 2 covers related literature and theory. Chapter 3 explains the research method employed. Chapter 4 reports and interprets the results. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the results, and Chapter 6 concludes the study with recommendations for future research.

Chapter 1

1. Literature Review

1.1. Eco- labeling

Most often, eco-labeling is seen as an effective tool for promoting sustainable consumption and raising consumer choice. Eco-labelling serves as a means of increasing market efficiency by guiding consumer choice and promoting greener practice. It operates in the marketplace, setting itself up for potential government action, such as the creation of regulation and legislation (Bratt et al., 2011). They serve as indicators of a product or service's overall environmental superiority within a specific category, determined through life cycle assessments (Global Ecolabelling Network, as cited in Bratt et al., 2011, p. 3). These labels are key cues to consumers that signal environmental performance and make sustainability information far more transparent. When presented with clear and understandable information, eco-labels increase demand for products that are believed to be environmentally friendly.

Examples of common eco-labels are the organic label for fruits and vegetables, the Energy Star mark for energy-saving products, and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) mark for sustainably harvested forests. With increasing numbers of consumers looking for environmental products, new schemes of eco-labels have expanded to fill an increasingly vibrant market that is concerned with sustainability (Bratt et al., 2011, p.7). Additionally, eco-labeling is a reward as well as a guideline for improved environmental and social performance by producers. Companies use eco-labels to mark their product's differentiation and influence purchasing decisions favorably. Companies are encouraged to be sustainable through the achievement of an eco-label, which leads to economic as well as moral returns. This competitive environment allows sustainability-driven innovation, and market activity gets combined with environmental commitments (Bratt et al., 2011, p. 9).

Consumer confidence in eco-labels is primarily based on what it says and the advantages that it believes will be achieved for the environment and society. These factors tend to influence consumer attitudes towards eco-labels and long-lasting products. Consumers are also sensitive to the environmental aspect and are backed by eco labels promising sustainability and low ecological footprint (Camilleri et al. 2023, p.10).

Additionally, eco-score labeling is a good marketing tool to convey the environmental impact. By using letter grades from A to F and color coding, makes the environmental impact easier to understand if compared to numerical data. Studies show that eco-score labels make consumers see products as more sustainable and reduce the perception of sustainability for unsustainable products. (Bratt et al., 2011, p. 11).

Eco-labeling programs from different parts of the world provide sustainable production and consumption practices. The best-known and one of the oldest of the pioneer and successful examples was the Blue Angel introduced in West Germany in 1978. A credible environmental label, such as Blue Ange, I will give huge penetration to the market for environmentally friendly products, especially when it is issued by a neutral or governmental body and based on scientifically grounded criteria. (Hemmelskamp & Brockmann, 1997).

According to Delmas and Grant (2010), eco-labels have become increasingly important in the objective of promoting sustainable practices. However, eco-labeling can also very depend on the geographic region. For instance, the Environmental Choice label in Canada and the Green Label in Israel are country-specific labels that aim to reduce environmental harm during production and use. These labels show the increasing need for transparency in environmental practices and their link to sustainable consumption. (Delmas & Grant, 2010).

At European level, the 1992 European Union Eco-label is an example of an integrated eco-labeling approach. It is a voluntary program that evaluates products and services throughout their entire lifecycle, from production to disposal, and requires compliance with high environmental standards. In India, the Ecomark and the comparatively newer Confederation of Indian Industries "GreenPro" are examples of how the role of the eco-label is evolving in developing nations.

Although Ecomark struggled to pick up pace at first, recent years have re-charged India's green labeling movement with a fresh emphasis on carbon footprint reduction and sustainability in the fast-moving consumer goods sector (Nair & Menon, 2019).

1.2. Product promotion

Eco-labels assure companies of their commitment to sustainability which is important for consumers to trust brands and build brand loyalty. These labels serve as third-party endorsements, indicating to consumers that the products have ecological requirements. Therefore, eco-labels are designed to be easily recognizable logos; they instill trust which is one of the core elements of consumer decision-making, recognizes that the company is being transparent in their practices and therefore helps develop the brand's credibility in consumer's eyes (Bratt et al., 2011).

Eco-labeling not only affects the conduct of consumers but also the way in which organizations react to critical stakeholders, such as distributors and suppliers. Eco-labeling challenges companies to work with their supply chain partners to enable them to react to environmental pressures. This usually involves rethinking the way materials are procured, the way products are produced, and the way they are shipped. Engagement of the stakeholders in the eco-labeling process guarantees a shared sense of responsibility and commitment towards sustainability (Bratt et al., 2011).

Eco-labels may also have a long-term impact on brand reputation because they reinforce this perception of a business as environmentally responsible. As eco-label scheme becomes more and more popular and standard strengthen, companies which consistently meet eco-label gold standards can distinguish themselves within the industry and gain a competitive advantage (Delmas & Grant, 2010).

The preservation of ecological balance is demarcated to mark in the minds of consumers and stakeholders a clear signal of how the organization is proactive and takes

steps to mitigate the adverse impact of global environmental issues by pledging for sustainable products (Delmas & Grant, 2010).

Eco-labels constitute an essential instrument to favor sustainable consumer behavior by driving green purchase intentions through trust and perceived value. These labels are credible signals of environmental friendliness and help nurture favorable attitudes toward these products. Eco-labels are, however, influenced by consumer awareness, cultural context, and the trustworthiness of the certifying agency (Bratt et al., 2011).

Chapter 2

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Strategy

The research strategy of this study is case study research, which is used to gain an in-depth understanding of real-world issues and experiences (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020). Instead of relying on numerical data, this type of research focus on insights and understanding from these experiences.

This methodology was selected as the most appropriate for examining the interaction between eco-labelling and product promotion. It tends to reveal stakeholder's perceptions, cultural settings, and incentives embedded in the empirical research phenomenon.

Unlike the quantitative studies that define variables for the eco-label, this qualitative study examines real practical issues and possibilities of eco-labeling. In addition, it examines the influence of cultural aspects on marketing strategies and perception and communication of sustainable information (Busetto et al., 2020).

2.2 Data collection and analysis

This study primarily depends on six interviews with industry professionals from Asian companies and an ANICP representative. The interviewees were chosen due to their geographic importance and industry experience, since ANICP would like to extend the Portuguese canned fish in the Japanese market.

The cases selected for this study focus on multinational companies and one smaller sized company that have adopted eco-labeling practices in their product promotion strategies. The selection process followed a purposive sampling method (Patton, 2002), choosing companies based on their active involvement in sustainable practices, market relevance, and willingness to participate in interviews.

The following companies and organizations were selected:

Company A: Corporate Communications Manager of Abbott.

Company B: Sales & Marketing Manager of Cocoon.

Company C: Senior Digital and Internal Communications Manager at Nestle Vietnam

Company D: Global Manager Unilever Vietnam

Company E: ANICP's Director of Communication

Since interviews were insufficient on their own to yield adequate data, secondary sources were employed as well. These included official European Union reports, and websites of the industries to support findings and serve as a broader context.

Employing primary and secondary data made the analysis more extensive, enlarging the scope of study to investigate the application of eco-labeling as a promotional strategy for products.

The primary data was executed in semi structured interviews with a variety of members from different companies and sectors. The interviews were concluded in the Zoom platform, considering the interviewees different time zones and busy schedules.

This approach ended up helping the process as it was flexible and more in depth to understand the topic. Recording and transcribing the interviews also helped for better understanding. The interviewer was thus able to focus on what was being said and discuss ideas with the participants without having the editorial burden of writing notes.

The interviewees were identified by different letters for them to remain anonymous. One person interviewed belongs to ANICP, being directly involved in promoting a product or eco-label, and the other interviewees were representatives from international companies using eco-labels.

In order to reach a well-supported perspective, secondary data was also gathered. ANICP promotional materials and reports about the Portuguese canned fish export industry as well as publications analyzing the consumption of eco-labeled products in Japan. This additional information provided necessary context and facilitated a more informed conversation in the interviews.

The interviews were transcribed using Google docs voice typing. Afterwards, these transcripts were manually reviewed and edited to ensure accuracy and correct any misspellings.

Chapter 3

Case

3.1. ANICP

Founded in 1977, ANICP is the association that represents the Portuguese canned fish sector. So, the organization's mission is to amplify the cooperation of the members, so that the development relevant implementations are done for the efficient member assistance. One of its leading plans is the integration of sustainable practices in their activities, through the growth of responsible fisheries and participation to international certifications such as Marine Stewardship Council (MCS).

ANICP is involved in European-level policy discussions to promote fair trade and offer protection from markets with lower environmental standards. The association has a strong commitment to the protection of marine ecosystems, and the long-term sustainability of the canned fish industry (Câmara de Comércio e Indústria Portuguesa, n.d.; ANICP).

During the past few years, the demand for eco-labeled seafood has presented considerable growth due to increasing consumer concerns for environmental issues, as well as the adoption of more strict international legislation. Research by Bratt et al. (2011) emphasized the increasing role of sustainability certifications, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), on consumer purchasing decisions.

Chapter 4

4. Discussion

This chapter mentions the main findings from the interviews, comparing them with existing literature to understand how eco-labels influence product promotion. Since this study is focused on Portuguese canned fish in the Japanese market, it will evaluate the challenges and relevance related to the use of eco-labels.

The cases selected for this study focus on multinational and one smaller sized company that have adopted eco-labeling practices in their product promotion strategies. The selection process was based on availability and personal recommendations, essentially networking.

The following companies and organizations were selected:

Company A: Corporate Communications Manager of Abbott.

Company B: Sales & Marketing Manager of Cocoon.

Company C: Senior Digital and Internal Communications Manager at Nestle Vietnam

Company D: Global Manager Unilever Vietnam

Company E: ANICP's Director of Communication

The interviewees had relatively similar views and work experience when it comes to the use of eco-label. Even though they have different job titles and different fields of work, they all agreed that eco-labels can be a useful tool for promoting sustainability and gaining consumer trust. For instance, interview A mentioned:

“An eco-label, qualified and issued by a trusted entity, will instill confidence in consumers when making purchase decisions”.

Interview A

According to Rex and Baumann (2007), eco-labels can serve as a tool to increase consumer’s trust and lessen distrust on a certain product or company. However, some interviewees mentioned that they believe eco-labels need to have additional information campaigns for a bigger impact. This aligns with the research by Rex and Baumann (2007), who states that eco-labels alone can’t drive purchase intention if not accompanied by awareness efforts.

“Eco-labeling is good, but not essential. It should go along with the whole eco-friendly packaging; otherwise, it won’t have a strong impact.”

Interview B

Hence, we suggest the following proposition:

P1: The greater the combination of eco-labeling and consumer education awareness, the higher is the consumer trust and purchase intention.

“The presence of an eco-label reinforces the perception of quality, transparency, and social responsibility of the brand, increasing consumer trust.”

Interview E

Eco-labels help in authenticating to the consumers that the product is eco-friendly, and therefore it becomes more credible and minimizes skepticism from consumers. Research by Dekhili and Achabou (2014) supports this, showing that both independently certified and self-declare eco-labels positively influence consumer preferences. This research is also in agreement with Camilleri et al. (2023), who indicates that eco-labels are self-standing certifications that give a product a more credible look to customers in their purchasing decisions.

"We transitioned Milo's plastic straws to paper straws, reducing 700 tones of plastic waste annually. But many consumers reacted negatively, complaining about inconvenience and demanding plastic straws back."

Interview C

However, even good intentioned initiatives for sustainability, such as eco-labels, can sometimes fall short when they are not aligned with consumer values or convenience. Kirchhoff (2000) states that the success for voluntary eco-labeling programs usually relies on consumer awareness, trust, and value of the perceived value of the label of the market. In this scenario, consumers perception of the product was negative since it was inconvenient for them to use it.

Hence, we suggest the following proposition:

P2: The greater the presence of third-party certification, the higher the credibility and trust in eco-labels, particularly in international markets.

"The cost of certification is high. It's difficult for small companies to afford it, especially when customers are more price-sensitive than sustainability-driven."

Interview B

As suggested by participant B, who is working in a relatively small firm, the fees of eco-label certification are an obstacle to prevent firms from embracing eco-labeling practices. This is consistent with Sharma & Kushwaha's research (2019), who pointed out high certification costs as one of the key setbacks in preventing small firms from implementing eco-labeling practices. Compared with larger firms, small firms lack the financial resources to meet the standards required to obtain an eco-label certification.

Hence, we suggest the following proposition:

P3: The higher the cost of eco-labels, the lower the adoption rate among small companies, limiting their ability to compete with larger firms.

“Eco-labels are valuable, but they need to be accompanied by strong consumer education. Many people don’t understand what they mean”.

Interview D

Another issue interviewees mentioned was the lack of consumer awareness when it comes to eco-labels. Eco-labels cannot alone create change if consumers don’t understand their importance and advantages (Paul, Malik, Mishra, & Teotia, 2023).

Hence, we suggest the following proposition:

P4: The greater the consumer education on eco-labels, the higher the likelihood of sustainable purchasing behavior.

“Many consumers in Japan are unfamiliar with European sustainability labels. We need more awareness campaigns to bridge that knowledge gap.”

Interview E

Similarly to interview D, interview E also mentioned about customer’s awareness. Thøgersen (2002) suggests that regional consumer knowledge and awareness contribute significantly to the success of eco-labels.

Hence, we suggest the following proposition:

P5: The effectiveness of eco-labels in influencing purchasing decisions is higher in sustainability-conscious markets than in price-sensitive markets.

In short, Eco-labels can lead to more sustainability and consumer trust, especially in the markets of Europe and Japan where consumers are prone to care more about environmentally friendly products. Still, for them to be used, they should be accompanied by proper awareness programs, or consumers might not completely trust them. Further, as certification costs remain too

high, most small businesses cannot invest in eco-labels. At the same time, third-party certifications such as MSC and EU Ecolabel add credibility, hence making eco-labels more effective globally. Therefore, eco-labels' success is based on trust, consumers' education, and market awareness.

Chapter 5

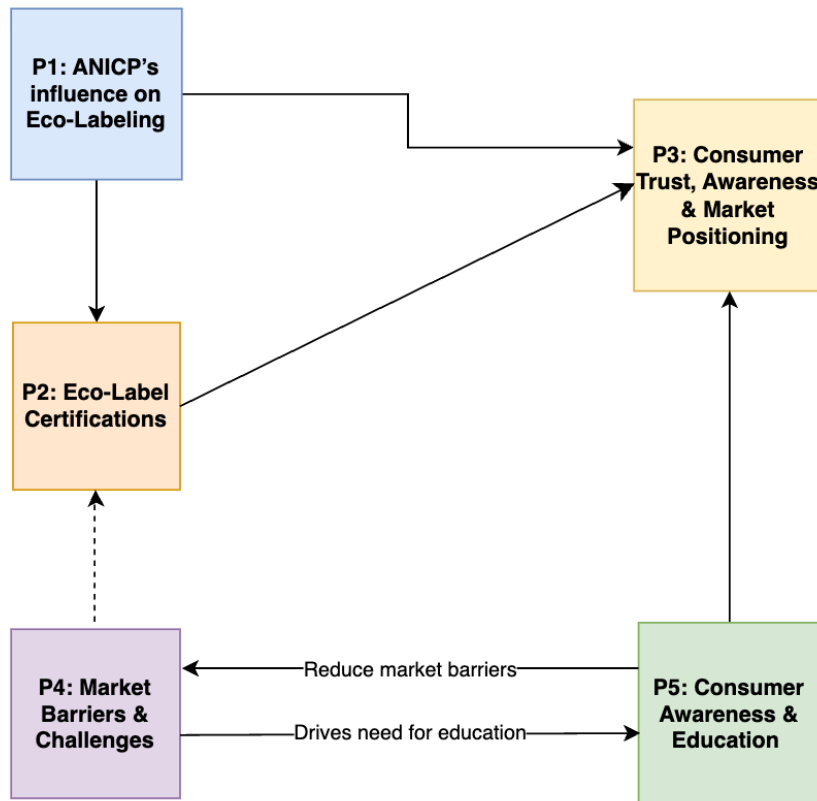
5.1. Conclusions

5.1. Final Theoretical framework

The research question of this study is: How eco-label influences product promotion? The findings of this research led to creating a final framework (Figure 1) to illustrate how eco-labeling, consumer trust, and product promotion are all interconnected.

Eco-labels assist consumers in identifying environmentally friendly products, and therefore they are more likely to purchase them (Grunert et al., 2014). It has also been researched that individuals perceive eco-labeled products as better quality and more sustainable, and this can increase sales (Testa et al., 2015).

The final theoretical framework also puts emphasis on consumer education and campaigns to make eco-labels fulfill their role effectively. The more consumers learn about eco-labels, the more consumers can differentiate true certification from greenwashing (Atkinson & Rosenthal, 2014).



Key

----- Negative Impact

Positive Impact

Figure 1: Final Theoretical Framework.

The proposed framework was created based on the dynamics of the Portuguese seafood industry:

Proposition 1 (P1): ANICP has a positive impact on eco-labeling practices and development in the Portuguese seafood industry.

Proposition 2 (P2): Eco-Label certifications influence how consumers view a product, helping it appear more trustworthy and environmentally friendly.

Proposition 3 (P3): Reliable eco-labeling and education can positively impact consumer trust, awareness, and strengthen market positioning of the product.

Proposition 4 (P4): Institutional regulations and market challenges may limit the efficacy and scope of eco-label certifications.

Proposition 5 (P5): Consumer awareness and education help reduce skepticism, marketplace barriers and increase the influence of eco-labels.

5.2. Limitations

This study had methodological, theoretical, and empirical limitations.

Methodologically, the study drew mostly on employee interviews, and this limits the method. Although useful, it will not necessarily be an accurate expression of the thoughts or perception of what eco-label is on the part of the average consumer. Therefore, it could have incorporated other methods, such as surveys, where larger numbers of individuals could have been involved.

Apart from methodological limitations, the study also has theoretical limitations. The study did not utilize standard psychological or behavioral theories that could assist in interpreting the findings, for example, Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), where people's behavior is determined by their attitude and what others expect of them. Another example is the Stimulus-Organism-Response (Jacoby, 2002) model, which helps explain how people react to an external influence, how one feels or thinks and how it leads to his or her choice. Therefore, since this study did not consider other theories, it could not delve further into why eco-labels affect consumer behavior in such a manner.

Empirically, there were some participants with limited knowledge about eco-labeling, and this might have influenced the depth and accuracy of the answers. Although their views are still valid to consider, they cannot possibly provide full or expert information on how eco-labels influence product promotion. Thus, the findings can be stated to be limited because most of the participants are not experts in the subject of eco-labeling. Another empirical limitation is the lack

of direct consumers' opinions. Without direct customer feedback, it is impossible to know whether eco-labels an effect have on buying or whether other variables such as price or brand loyalty have a greater influence.

In addition to this, while the study analyzes firms' attitudes towards eco-labels, the study lacks any empirical data. Without data first-hand, it is not feasible to quantify the real influence of eco-labels on marketing a product. What this implies is that while the study presents firm qualitative findings, it is not practical to measure how significant the extent to which customer purchase behavior and firm performance is affected by eco-labels.

5.3. Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies might explore comparative work across regions to understand how these variables shape the effectiveness of eco-labels in the pursuit of sustainable consumption (Paul, Malik, Mishra, & Teotia, 2023).

Investigating the shortcomings of eco-labels, their effectiveness, and availability across markets, can guide additional research. In addition, the influence of younger generations like Gen Z, who care more about sustainability and online interactions, can change the marketing of eco-labels (Paul et al., 2023).

These principles highlight the promise of eco-labels as a revolutionary tool for not just sustainable consumption but sustainable consumption on a global scale. Such future research can provide critical dimensions to the existing literature on sustainability marketing by exploring the strategic implications of eco-labels and, as a result, provide recommendations for both businesses and policymakers to influence eco-consumer behaviors and catalyze sustainable market transformations.

Future research would also benefit from having a wider diversity of interview subjects, including additional European and Japanese industry representatives, consumer surveys, and

quantitative examination to provide a more complete indication of the impact of eco-labels on the market dynamics. Further, it should also consider the importance of quantitative research for evaluating the direct impact of eco-labels on sales performance.

With the rise of greenwashing, it is also important that future research explore in depth regulations and legislations that can impose standards on eco-labeling, by dissuading misleading advertising.

5.4. Practical Implications

The final theoretical framework of this study (Figure 1) allows businesses to gain insights on how to build an effective sustainability marketing strategy. It will help them see which factors are affecting consumer decisions in this case the role of certifications for products, cost-related challenges, and general level of awareness of consumers.

Ultimately, these findings aim to create a better, more accessible eco-labeling system, one that helps consumers make sustainable choices and ensures the long-term growth of a greener, more responsible market.

In terms of the propositions, proposition 1 (P1) ANICP can assist the Portuguese seafood industry in a more widespread use of ecolabels. This way, companies can benefit from market recognition, as with the support of ANICP it could enhance people's perception of their sustainability efforts.

Proposition 2 (P2), since eco-labels affect how consumer perceive a product, eco-label is a very powerful marketing tool, allowing companies to stand out and target environmentally conscious consumers, which can result in consumer trust and loyalty.

With Proposition 3 (P3), business that invest in eco-labels that are credible and effective consumer education will have a positive result when it comes to consumer trust and awareness. Thus, business that are transparent and not only adopt eco-labels but invest in educating customers about environmental benefits of their products, will strengthen consumer trust and their brand's

market position, given that consumers tend to prefer brands that share their environmental and personal values.

Proposition (P4) mentions the challenges associated with eco-label certifications, such as the barriers they pose for smaller businesses. Since there are market barriers such as high cost of eco-labels and regulations, the adoption of eco-labels becomes especially hard among smaller businesses.

Lastly, Proposition 5 (P5), reinforces how consumer awareness and education is essential to reduce skepticism and overcome challenges created by the market. With more education, more likely consumers will choose to support business and encourage it to adopt sustainable practices.

References

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT to support the writing and editing process, including assistance with references, in-text citation formatting, and grammar improvement. All content generated with the assistance of this tool was carefully reviewed and revised by the author, who takes full responsibility for the final version of the publication.

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)

ANICP. (n.d.). Associação Nacional das Indústrias de Conservas de Peixe (ANICP). Retrieved from <https://anicp.pt/en/home-2/>

Bratt, C., Hallstedt, S., Robèrt, K.-H., Broman, G., & Oldmark, J. (2011). Assessment of eco-labelling criteria development from a strategic sustainability perspective. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 19(14), 1631-1638. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959652611001740?via%3Dihub>

Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and Practice*, 2(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42466-020-00059-z>

Camilleri, M. A., Cricelli, L., Mauriello, R., & Strazzullo, S. (2023). Consumer perceptions of sustainable products: A systematic literature review. *Sustainability*, 15(11), 8923. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15118923>

Câmara de Comércio e Indústria Portuguesa. (n.d.). Sustainability and trade policies in Portugal. Retrieved from [Website URL if available]

Delmas, M. A., & Grant, L. E. (2010). Eco-labeling strategies and price-premium: The wine industry puzzle. *Business & Society*, 49(3), 1-27. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0007650310362254>

Grunert, K. G., Hieke, S., & Wills, J. (2014). Sustainability labels on food products: Consumer motivation, understanding and use. *Food Policy*, 44, 177–189. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0306919213001796?via%3Dihub>

Hemmelskamp, J., & Brockmann, K. L. (n.d.). Environmental labels—the German ‘Blue Angel’. *Futures*, 29(1), 67–76. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-3287\(96\)00066-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-3287(96)00066-3)

Houf, L., Szymkowiak, A., & Shepherd, L. A. (2024). Promotion of Sustainable Products: Can Sustainability Labels Promote User Selection of Environmentally Friendly Products? *Sustainability*, 16(13), 5390. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16135390>

Grunert, K. G., Hieke, S., & Wills, J. M. (2014). Sustainability labels on food products: Consumer motivation, understanding and use. *Food Policy*, 44, 177–189. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259502866_Sustainability_Labels_on_Food_Products_Consumer_Motivation_Understanding_and_Use

Jacoby, J. (2002). Stimulus–Organism–Response reconsidered: An evolutionary step in modeling (consumer) behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 12(1), 51–57. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327663JCP1201_05

Kirchoff, J. F., Tate, W. L., & Mollenkopf, D. A. (2016). The impact of strategic organizational orientations on green supply chain management and firm performance. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 46(3), 269-292. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPDLM-03-2015-0055>

Nair, S. R., & Menon, C. G. (2007). An environmental marketing system – A proposed model based on Indian experience. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 16(6), 384–396. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230144467_An_Environmental_Marketing_System_-_A_Proposed_Model_Based_on_Indian_Experience

Paul, D., Malik, S., Mishra, D. K., & Teotia, A. (2023). A Study on Effectiveness of Ecolabels in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Sector. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 1161(1), 012004. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1161/1/012004>

Rex, E., & Baumann, H. (2007). Beyond ecolabels: what green marketing can learn from conventional marketing. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 15(6), 567-576. Retrieved from: <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1755-1315/1161/1/012004/meta>

Sharma, N. K., & Kushwaha, G. S. (2019). Eco-labels: A tool for green marketing or just a blind mirror for consumers. *Electronic Green Journal*, 1(42). Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6k83s5mv>

Testa, F., Iraldo, F., Vaccari, A., & Ferrari, E. (2015). Why eco-labels can be effective marketing tools: Evidence from a study on Italian consumers. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 24(4), 252–265. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/bse.1821>

Thøgersen, J. (2002). *Promoting sustainable consumption: The use of eco-labels*. *Environmental Economics and Policy Studies*, 4(3), 175–185. Retrieved from: <https://pure.au.dk/portal/en/publications/promoting-green-consumer-behavior-with-eco-labels-2>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consent Form

Interview Consent Form:

1. Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to answer specific questions or withdraw at any time without any consequences or impact on your relationship with the researcher, Mariana Vieira.

2. Purpose of the Study:

This study aims to explore ANICP's strategies for promoting Portuguese canned fish, with a focus on the role of eco-labels and product promotion in enhancing sustainability.

3. Benefits of Participation:

By participating, you will provide valuable insights into eco-labeling initiatives, sustainability strategies, and the promotion of Portuguese canned fish in international markets like Japan. Participants will be given access to the study's findings upon completion.

4. Confidentiality:

All information shared during the interview will be treated confidentially. Recordings and transcripts will be securely stored and accessible only to the researcher. Your responses will be anonymized in the final analysis and report to ensure privacy.

5. Recording and Use of Data:

The interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription. Only the researcher will have access to the recordings, which will be anonymized for use in this study. The recordings will be securely deleted after the research is completed.

6. No Risks Involved:

To the best of our knowledge, there are no risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study.

Signature: _____

Date: ___ / ___ / _____



Appendix 2: Interview Guide

□

Standardized Open Question Interview Guide

1. What is your definition of eco-label?
2. What are the most recognized types of eco-labels in your organization?
3. Do you believe eco-labeling is an essential factor in your industry today? Why or why not?
4. From your experience, are eco-labels more effective in influencing older or younger consumers, and why?
5. How does the presence of an eco-label influence consumer trust and purchasing decisions?
6. Can you elaborate on the criteria and processes your organization follows to ensure products meet the standards of the eco-labels displayed?
7. What are the marketing strategies of your organization for eco-labeled products?
8. How does your organization promote eco-labeled products for export?
9. Can you give me examples of successful international eco-labeling campaigns?
10. Do you think eco-labels help the engagement of your organization with international key stakeholders, including suppliers and distributors?

If you have reviewed and are willing to participate in the interview, please sign below.

Signature: _____ | _____

Date: ___ / ___ / _____



Appendix 3: Interview

Interview Transcript:

Interview A -Corporate Communications Manager of Abbott.

1. What is your definition of eco-label?

Answer: An eco-label is a label that provides consumers with information about the environmental impact of a product, helping them make informed purchasing decisions.

2. What are the most recognized types of eco-labels in your organization?

Answer: At my previous food and beverage company, the packaging of a milk box included information on how much of the packaging could be recycled. The attached straw was made from FSC-certified materials, helping reduce tons of plastic in the original packaging.

3. Do you believe eco-labeling is an essential factor in your industry today? Why or why not?

Answer: I believe eco-labeling is one of several actions the industry can take to demonstrate its commitment to reducing the environmental impact caused by poorly managed packaging. Addressing 100% of the problem, including waste that ends up in landfills or packaging that leaks into the environment, is no easy task. It requires commitment from the industry, government, and consumers alike.

4. From your experience, are eco-labels more effective in influencing older or younger consumers, and why?

Answer: Some industry studies have shown that urban consumers within certain age ranges are more likely to base their purchasing decisions on eco-friendly products. I believe younger people might be easier to influence when it comes to eco-friendly purchasing decisions. They tend to be

more engaged with sustainability and environmental issues, partly because they grew up with greater awareness of climate change and its impacts.

5. How does the presence of an eco-label influence consumer trust and purchasing decisions?

Answer: An eco-label, qualified and issued by a trusted entity, will instill confidence in consumers when making purchase decisions. On the other hand, a product label also showcases the manufacturer's strong commitment to sustainability goals and can help build brand equity and trust.

6. Can you elaborate on the criteria and processes your organization follows to ensure products meet the standards of the eco-labels displayed?

Answer: All products made or purchased for consumption in Vietnam must comply with local regulations on labeling and product safety. Unfortunately, the eco-labeling practice at my previous company was voluntary. However, I believe that soon, the government will implement mandatory actions for manufacturers, including labeling requirements.

7. What are the marketing strategies of your organization for eco-labeled products?

Answer: The purpose of labeling in marketing is to help consumers make informed decisions, increase their awareness of the environmental impacts and build brand equity and trust, through transparency and responsibility.

8. How does your organization promote eco-labeled products for export?

Answer: (Unfortunately, I don't have knowledge to answer this question)

9. Can you give me examples of successful international eco-labeling campaigns?

Answer: In the coffee and other agricultural - product industry, there are some successful examples including Fair Trade Certification; Rainforest Alliance Certification.

10. Do you think eco-labels help the engagement of your organization with international key stakeholders, including suppliers and distributors?

Answer: Definitely, yes.

Appendix 4:

Interview Transcript

Interview B – Sales & Marketing Manager of Cocoon

1. What is your definition of eco-label?

Answer. We don't separate between labels and the whole packaging. Everything made from Cocoon Factory must be sustainable. According to that mission, an eco-label is a label that is sustainable for developing: sustainable ingredients, recyclability, along with a sustainable growing brand (better sales = faster recycling).

2. What are the most recognized types of eco-labels in your organization?

Answer: We have two types: removable (for bottles) and non-removable labels (for tubes that we print directly). The removable label is favorable due to its potential for reuse.

3. Do you believe eco-labeling is an essential factor in your industry today? Why or why not?

I think it is good but not so essential, since the label is just a very small part of a whole product and is usually removed. It should go along with the whole eco-friendly packaging.

4. From your experience, are eco-labels more effective in influencing older or younger consumers, and why?

Answer: No. Younger consumers don't care much about eco-labels. They care more about dynamic design, the concept, CSR/Marketing campaigns, and especially the price. Eco-labels play a very small part in the impact.

5. How does the presence of an eco-label influence consumer trust and purchasing decisions?

Answer: It can only influence if it goes along with the whole eco-friendly packaging.

6. Can you elaborate on the criteria and processes your organization follows to ensure products meet the standards of the eco-labels displayed?

Answer: Before coming to the market, we conduct several tests with the packaging in general. It is not confidential, but I don't have much information about it.

7. What are the marketing strategies of your organization for eco-labeled products?

We don't market the eco-label itself, but we market the impact of the brand—from collecting and buying the resources to making the product and selling the item.

8. How does your organization promote eco-labeled products for export?

Answer: We don't promote eco-labels for export. It's all about price and quality.

9. Can you give me examples of successful international eco-labeling campaigns?

Answer: Not really since this is quite new to the Vietnam industry.

10. Do you think eco-labels help the engagement of your organization with international key stakeholders, including suppliers and distributors?

Answer: No. Since we are a cosmetics company, suppliers and distributors would come to us no matter what we use.

Appendix 5:

Interview Transcript

Interview C– Senior Digital and Internal Communications Manager Nestlé Vietnam.

1. What is your definition of eco-label?

Answer: So, to my perspective, an ECO label is like a label or a badge that given to a product or services that meet strict environmental standards. That it shows that they were made or done in a way that's better for a planet. So, in a fun way, it's like an invisible badge for a product that go the extra mile to protect our planet. It's not just saying about we care about sustainability, but about providing it by proving it through actions such as saving energy, recycling materials, and reducing cap on emissions.

2. What are the most recognized types of eco-labels in your organization?

Answer: For Nestlé Global, there are over 2,000 brands, and for Nestlé Vietnam alone, we manage a vast portfolio of products. Given the diversity of our offerings, we utilize numerous eco-labels. Additionally, we are a founding member of the Vietnam Packaging Recycling Organization, where we lead recycling initiatives and have pledged to achieve plastic neutrality by 2025.

Among the many eco-labels associated with our brands, two stand out as the most recognized within our organization. The first is Milo, a well-known children's beverage—though I don't believe it is available in Portugal. As part of its commitment to environmental sustainability, Milo transitioned from plastic straws to paper straws in 2021. The eco-label associated with this initiative is the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification, which ensures responsible sourcing of paper materials. The second is Nescafé, a globally recognized coffee brand. Nescafé

is closely linked to the Nescafé Plan, which focuses on sustainable coffee production and improving farmers' livelihoods. Through this initiative, the brand sources coffee certified by the 4C (Common Code for the Coffee Community), an eco-label that guarantees environmentally and socially responsible coffee sourcing practices. These two brands represent some of the most impactful sustainability efforts within our organization.

3. Do you believe eco-labeling is an essential factor in your industry today? Why or why not?

Yes, absolutely. Eco-labeling is an essential factor in the food and beverage industry because consumers care deeply about sustainability. However, the purpose of eco-labels is not simply to avoid greenwashing or make environmental claims for the sake of marketing. What truly matters is ensuring that eco-labeling accurately quantifies sustainability efforts in a clear and reasonable way. This allows companies to measure their impact, enables consumers to track progress, and fosters shared responsibility in protecting the environment. Another important thing to mention is the Vietnam's legal aspect. This approach aligns with regulatory requirements, such as the 2020 Environmental Protection Law and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws, which emphasize corporate accountability and sustainability. In short, eco-labeling is very important.

4. From your experience, are eco-labels more effective in influencing older or younger consumers, and why?

Answer: Eco-labels are generally more effective in influencing younger consumers, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, because they tend to be more environmentally conscious. These generations place a higher value on sustainability and actively seek products that align with their values, such as environmental protection and ethical sourcing. Many are even willing to pay a premium for products with strong sustainability credentials. Older generations may also appreciate eco-labels, but they often prioritize traditional factors like price, convenience, or brand familiarity. However, eco-labels can still resonate with them if they are accompanied by clear, tangible benefits.

5. How does the presence of an eco-label influence consumer trust and purchasing decisions?

Answer: From my experience, I believe eco-labeling is crucial in building trust—whether with stakeholders, partners, or internal teams. These labels provide a quantifiable measure of sustainability progress, helping us track achievements and guide our journey toward net zero. However, when it comes to influencing end consumers and their purchasing decisions, the impact of eco-labels remains a highly debated topic in the industry. Since we operate in the food and beverage sector, specifically within Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), consumer purchasing behavior tends to prioritize factors like price, convenience, and brand familiarity over sustainability. Another key challenge is the limited consumer understanding of eco-labels. Not everyone fully grasps what these labels mean—especially younger generations. While they may recognize eco-labels, they don't always understand or value their environmental benefits.

A real-world example from my experience at Nestlé Vietnam illustrates this challenge. In 2021, we made a bold decision to transition Milo's plastic straws to paper straws, reducing 700 tones of plastic waste annually. Given growing environmental awareness, we expected young consumers to embrace the change. However, the reality was quite different. Upon launch, we faced significant backlash, particularly from millennials. Consumers flooded our social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and our website, with complaints. The primary concerns were paper straws becoming soggy in milk, loss of convenience, as many had a habit of biting their straws while drinking and demand for plastic straws to return, despite the sustainability benefits. This unexpected reaction led to a temporary drop in sales and a communication crisis as we worked to manage consumer dissatisfaction. Even today, despite continued improvements in paper straw quality, some consumers still find them inconvenient. This situation was important so that we could understand that for consumers, sustainability efforts must be carefully balanced with practicality, convenience to ensure long-term success.

6. Can you elaborate on the criteria and processes your organization follows to ensure products meet the standards of the eco-labels displayed?

Answer: The process is long and complex, involving many stakeholders. In short, we rely heavily on market experts and work closely with product and factory teams to ensure everything aligns with eco-label standards. Additionally, the brand and marketing teams play a crucial role in ensuring effective communication with consumers. It's a significant joint effort from all teams to make it happen.

7. What are the marketing strategies of your organization for eco-labeled products?

Answer: Nestlé's marketing strategies follow global guidelines, ensuring transparency and consistency across all campaigns. We prioritize clear and honest communication about eco-labeling, aligning with our sustainability commitments. When introducing an unfamiliar eco-label, like our paper straw initiative, we focus on consumer education to highlight environmental benefits. For instance, when we replaced plastic straws with FSC-certified paper straws, some consumers questioned whether this contributed to deforestation. The FSC label ensures that all materials are sustainably sourced, and eco-labels help us dispel misconceptions like this. However, a key communication challenge is packaging design—since space is prioritized for ingredients, nutritional facts, and usage instructions, eco-labels often appear small and easy to overlook. This makes it harder to raise awareness, but we continue finding ways to effectively communicate our sustainability efforts.

8. How does your organization promote eco-labeled products for export?

Answer: Nestlé is a large corporation with factories and offices in nearly every country. For countries with products eligible for export, we ensure clear and effective communication on our website, often with a dedicated brochure for exported products. Additionally, each market has an import and export team under the supply chain. Honestly, so far, I haven't encountered any difficulties during this process.

9. Can you give me examples of successful international eco-labeling campaigns?

Answer: A great example of a successful campaign is Nescafé Blend, a well-known brand that everyone associates with coffee. Nescafé Blend has been a long-term initiative focused on

sustainable coffee farming, with the key eco-label being 4C certification. This certification ensures environmentally and socially responsible sourcing practices, which is a significant reason for the campaign's success. We could remind and communicate this message annually, especially around International Coffee Day on October 1st. Additionally, Nescafé Blend has a clear roadmap and progress report available on the website, which I can share with you. This is a strong example of a successful sustainability campaign.

10. Do you think eco-labels help the engagement of your organization with international key stakeholders, including suppliers and distributors?

Answer: Yes, absolutely. Especially when it comes to eco-labels that are accepted globally or internationally, they significantly enhance our engagement with key international stakeholders, suppliers, and distributors. Such labels are seen as a mark of achievement and a high standard for the products we provide to consumers. They also help build stronger relationships and ensure compliance with international sustainability standards.

Appendix 6:

Interview Transcript

Interview D - Global Manager at Unilever

1. What is your definition of eco-label?

Answer: A simple and quick definition of eco-label would be a small sign on a certain product that informs consumers about the impact that this product has on the environment, so that they can make educated choices regarding which items to purchase. It is basically a certification.

2. What are the most recognized types of eco-labels in your organization?

Answer: Most famous eco-label from my company is the easy green label launched in 2021, in partnership with Lazada. It was launched as a campaign during Earth Day. This label was created to help consumers identify products that can offer environmental benefits.

3. Do you believe eco-labeling is an essential factor in your industry today? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, especially considering the industry I work with. Since Unilever belongs to the food industry, a lot of consumers are worried about the impact the product they are consuming will have on the environment. It also aligns with Unilever vision of sustainability.

4. From your experience, are eco-labels more effective in influencing older or younger consumers, and why?

Answer: My experience at Unilever has shown me that eco-labels are more successful in influencing younger consumers, especially Gen Z and millennials. In general, these generations are more concerned about the environment and give sustainability more weight when making judgments about what to buy. They actively look for things that reflect their ideals.

5. How does the presence of an eco-label influence consumer trust and purchasing decisions?

Answer: I believe it's because these labels inform consumers. It also reassures them that the goods they buy are environmentally friendly and consistent with their values. As consumers increasingly look for brands that are dedicated to sustainability and environmental protection, this fosters trust.

6. Can you elaborate on the criteria and processes your organization follows to ensure products meet the standards of the eco-labels displayed?

Answer: We get our products to meet eco-label requirements by closely adhering to the sustainability standards carefully formulated by third-party certifying agencies. This is achieved through cooperating with suppliers to practice responsible material sourcing, conducting environmental impact within us, and undergoing regular third-party audits. We maintain our

processes continually optimizing in a manner that reduces energy consumption, waste, and emissions, and communicating transparent information to consumers regarding the eco-labels applied to our products.

7. What are the marketing strategies of your organization for eco-labeled products?

Answer: The focus must be on transparency and innovation. We are committed to creating a positive impact on our environment, so we want to educate consumers so that they can make informed decisions.

8. . How does your organization promote eco-labeled products for export?

Answer: By partnering with global retailers and we also use the strategy of localized campaigns to tailor our marketing strategies to different needs and preferences.

9. Can you give me examples of successful international eco-labeling campaigns?

Answer: From Unilever, a successful example related to eco-labels one was the “sustainable living plan” campaign, which includes eco labels such as fairtrade, rainforest alliance, etc.

10. Do you think eco-labels help the engagement of your organization with international key stakeholders, including suppliers and distributors?

Answer: Yes, considering the distributors and suppliers dynamic. Suppliers must be aligned with the same goals as Unilever in terms of sustainability, and Unilever’s products are more attractive to distributors if they meet certain environmental criteria.

Appendix 7:

Interview transcript

ANICP - (Associação Nacional dos Industriais de Conservas de Peixe)

1. What is your definition of eco-label?

The main eco-labels used in the Portuguese canned fish industry include the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), and the Friend of the Sea (FOS) seal. Several Portuguese companies in the canned fish sector hold MSC and FOS certifications, including leading brands such as Ramirez, Cofaco, Conserveira do Sul, and Pinhais, among others. These certifications ensure that products come from sustainable fishing practices and adhere to good environmental practices.

2. How important is eco-labeling in the seafood industry today?

Yes, eco-labeling is an essential factor in the seafood industry today. The growing environmental concerns and consumer demand for sustainable products make eco-labels a competitive differentiator. Additionally, many international markets impose strict sustainability requirements, making these certifications crucial for the expansion of Portuguese exports.

3. Which target audience is most influenced by eco-labels?

The perception of eco-labels tends to be stronger among younger consumers, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, who show greater concern for sustainability and environmental responsibility. However, older consumers, especially in demanding European markets, also value eco-labels, particularly when associated with product quality and origin.

4. How do eco-labels influence consumer trust and purchasing decisions?

The presence of an eco-label reinforces the perception of quality, transparency, and social responsibility of the brand, increasing consumer trust. Many buyers, especially in markets such as

Germany, France, and Nordic countries, consider eco-labels a determining factor in choosing canned fish products.

5. What feedback have ANICP partners provided on the impact of eco-labels on exports?

ANICP partners have described eco-labels as a relevant factor for increasing exports, especially to markets where sustainability is a growing requirement. The MSC seal, for example, is often requested by distributors and retailers in Europe and North America. Additionally, emerging markets are beginning to place greater value on certified products, driving sector growth and differentiating Portuguese canned fish on the international stage.

6. What role does innovation play in how ANICP promotes Portuguese canned fish in international markets?

Innovation is essential in promoting Portuguese canned fish, helping to add value to the product. This can include developing new flavors, more sustainable packaging, or digital strategies to increase online presence and captivate younger consumers. ANICP uses innovation to differentiate products in global markets, highlighting aspects such as the combination of tradition and modernity in both flavors (sauces) and packaging, as well as the convenience of ready-to-eat salads.

7. How has ANICP adjusted its strategic planning based on lessons learned from previous promotional campaigns or international collaborations?

ANICP regularly reviews its campaigns to identify what worked and where there is room for improvement. Adjustments may include prioritizing markets with higher growth potential, adapting messages to meet local cultural preferences, and expanding strategic partnerships with distributors and global influencers. Additionally, previous experiences encourage a greater focus on sustainability and traceability, addressing the growing interest of consumers in these topics.

8. What are the main objectives of ANICP in promoting Portuguese canned fish in global markets?

The main objectives are to increase awareness and recognition of Portuguese canned fish as premium products, expand market share in international markets, especially in high-potential countries, strengthen and increase domestic consumption, promote Portugal's image as a reference for quality and tradition in the canned fish industry, and strengthen the sector while contributing to the economic growth of members by positioning canned fish as sustainable and healthy products.

9. What unique qualities make Portuguese canned fish stand out from other seafood in international markets?

Portuguese canned fish stand out due to superior quality, produced with high-standard fresh fish, respecting traditional practices such as Portuguese sardines and tuna caught in the Azores. The use of centuries-old methods preserves flavor and texture, while the commitment to responsible fishing practices and eco-friendly packaging enhances sustainability. The wide range of flavors with creative combinations, including 36 canned fish species and more than 800 references, appeals to discerning consumers. Canned fish is deeply connected to Portuguese culture, creating a unique narrative for the consumer.

10. What are the key lessons ANICP has learned from past events that will help drive future success?

ANICP has learned the importance of customizing the approach by market, as each country has specific preferences and expectations requiring tailored messages and strategies. Investing in digitalization is crucial to reach younger and more informed consumers. The rising demand for sustainable practices is a key factor in attracting international markets. Establishing strategic collaborations with international brands, renowned chefs, and influencers increases reach and credibility. Promoting consumer education by showcasing the versatility and benefits of canned fish as a gourmet and healthy product helps change old perceptions and dispel urban myths.