

# Exploring Greenwashing Awareness Among Thai Retail Investors Towards Sustainable Investment Trends

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## ABSTRACT

In an era where environmental consciousness is reshaping financial markets, the deceptive practice of “greenwashing” threatens to undermine the integrity of sustainable investments. This study investigates how Thai retail investors navigate the complexities of greenwashing in Thailand's burgeoning sustainable finance sector. As global investment trends increasingly embrace sustainability, this research explores whether investors can distinguish genuine environmental initiatives from clever marketing ploys. Employing a qualitative approach, the study engages 30 Thai retail investors through semi-structured interviews, unveiling the intricacies of investor awareness and decision-making in the face of potential greenwashing. The research constructs a narrative of how information flows shape investor perceptions and choices. Moreover, highlights the complex relationship between greenwashing awareness, risk perception, and investment choices, emphasizing the need for comprehensive education and policy interventions. This research not only illuminates the challenges faced by Thai investors but also serves as a call for aligning investor values with authentic environmental sustainability. By exposing the hidden risks threatening the foundation of sustainable finance, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on greenwashing awareness and its impact on investment decisions in emerging markets.

**Keyword:** Sustainable Investment/ Greenwashing Awareness/ Retail Investor/ ESG Funds/ Sustainable Development

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The global financial landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by an unprecedented surge in sustainable investments that integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations. This shift is reshaping markets worldwide, with Thailand's emerging sustainable finance sector at the forefront of this revolution. The exponential growth of the global green finance market provides compelling evidence of this trend. From a modest \$5.2 billion in 2012, the market has expanded to an impressive \$540.6 billion in 2021 from Reuters, (2022) [1], underscoring its growing importance in driving sustainable economic development. In Thailand, this global trend is mirrored in the nascent ESG Fund sector, which has exhibited notable traction among investors despite its recent establishment. In 2024, the sector achieved an overall asset value growth rate of approximately 3.3%. Analysis of fund composition reveals a predominant focus on equity investments, accounting for over 76% of assets, followed by mixed funds and fixed income funds. Notably, fixed income funds have demonstrated the highest growth rate at 30.6% in 2024, Morningstar (2024) [2].

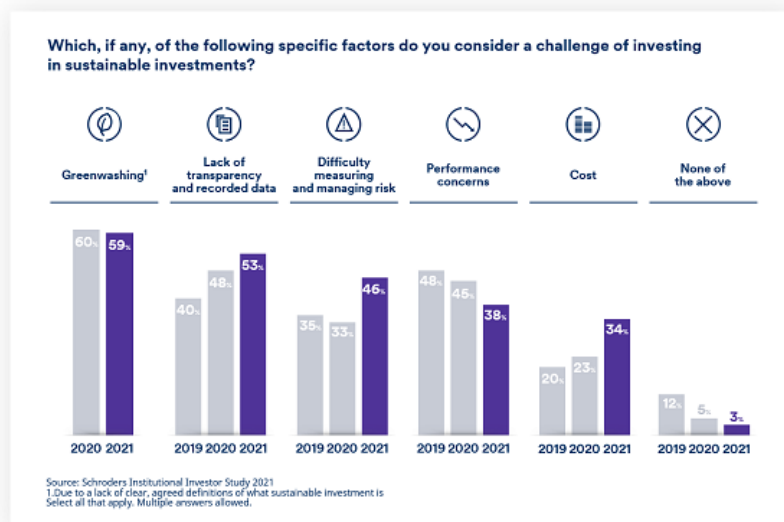


Figure 1. A challenge of investing in sustainable investment (Schroders, 2021)

However, this rapid growth in sustainable finance has brought to light a significant challenge: greenwashing. As firms increasingly disclose large quantities of ESG data while potentially maintaining poor ESG performance, it creates a significant barrier to genuine ESG integration in investment decisions Ellen Pei-yi Yua (2020). [3] This disconnect between reported and actual sustainability practices not only undermines the integrity of the sustainable finance market but also potentially misleads well-intentioned investors. The ethical dimension of this issue by Tirole (2010) [4] stated that stakeholders demand corporate social responsibility to maintain legitimacy in the market. This connection is particularly relevant given observation that companies frequently employ greenwashing techniques to cultivate favourable perceptions. Raise investors' concern about greenwashing (59%) and the lack of openness and data surrounding sustainable investing (53%) remain the primary concerns (Schroders, 2021) [5].

Therefore, this research lies in addressing this growing challenge of greenwashing in Thailand's sustainable investment landscape. The study explores through the retail investor lens that might be affected by greenwashing. By examining Thai retail investors' awareness of greenwashing and its impact on their investment choices. The insights gained are vital for various stakeholders - from financial institutions seeking to build trust, to regulators working to protect investors, to policymakers striving to foster a truly responsible investment environment. Ultimately, this research is essential for ensuring the authenticity and effectiveness of sustainable investing practices and aims to support the development of a more transparent and sustainable investment environment. By doing so, it contributes to the broader goal of aligning financial markets with sustainable development objectives, both in Thailand and globally.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research design and sampling

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore greenwashing awareness among Thai retail investors, utilizing in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a purposively sampled demographic. The research design targets current retail investors as defined by The Stock Exchange of Thailand (2021) [6], with specific inclusion criteria to ensure relevance and depth of insights. Eligible participants must have invested in ESG funds, including Thai ESG funds, or related funds and have a minimum monthly income of 25,000 baht after tax. This income threshold, derived from previous research on Thai retail investors (Songkietsak, 1999) [7], helps ensure participants have the financial capacity for meaningful investment activities. The study involved 30 Thai retail investors

who met these criteria, participating in interviews lasting 45-60 minutes each. These sessions, conducted both online and offline to ensure broad accessibility, consisted of 20 questions designed to probe participants' awareness and attitudes towards greenwashing in sustainable investments. By including a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, the study aims to gain comprehensive insights into how individual investors perceive and understand the concept of greenwashing in investment practices, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon within the Thai retail investment sector.

## ***2.2 Questionnaire development***

The development of the research questionnaire was a crucial step in ensuring the collection of comprehensive and relevant data to address the study's objectives. The questionnaire was designed to explore greenwashing awareness among Thai retail investors in sustainable or ESG funds, with a focus on their understanding, perceptions, and decision-making processes. The questionnaire structure followed a semi-structured, open-ended format, allowing for flexibility in responses while maintaining consistency across interviews. This approach was chosen to facilitate an in-depth exploration of real-world situations and experiences of retail investors. The questions were carefully crafted to probe into various aspects of greenwashing awareness and its impact on investment decisions.

To achieve the research objective, the questionnaire was developed as follows:

1. Demographic Information:
  - Initial questions focused on gathering participants' demographic features.
2. Greenwashing Awareness and ESG Fund Knowledge:
  - This section employed structured test based on a 5-point Likert scale, to collect specific data on greenwashing awareness.
  - Questions probed participants' basic knowledge of ESG mutual funds.
3. Influencing Factors and Sustainable Finance Recognition:
  - The final section explored factors influencing greenwashing awareness.
  - Questions inquired about types of sustainable finance recognized by participants.
  - Participants were asked about their preferred fund types.

The questionnaire structure was based on the Hierarchy of Effects model [8], establishing a research framework that guided question formulation. This framework addressed three key areas: Awareness/Knowledge, Preferences, and Purchase.

The complete questionnaire consisted of five sections, structured as follows:

Section 1: Screening Questions Included screening questions that developed short inquiries, asking participants to choose from a predefined set of responses, such as yes-no answers, to screen for income, age, investment type, basic knowledge of ESG funds, and investment experiences.

Section 2: Demographic Information Collected demographic information about participants, such as their gender, degree of education, and other relevant questions.

Section 3: Perspective on Sustainable Investment and Awareness of Greenwashing; Assessed participants' awareness of greenwashing practices in the investment industry and their understanding of behavioural criteria in sustainable investing.

Section 4: Investment Behaviour of Retail Investors; Investigated the behavioural patterns of retail investors in relation to ESG investments, including decision-making processes and investment strategies.

Section 5: Influencing Factors of Retail Investor Decision-Making Explored the factors that influenced retail investors' decision-making processes when it came to ESG investments.

Open-ended question: When evaluating ESG fund marketing materials, how much weight do you give to these statements, such as “committed to sustainability” or “environmentally conscious”? Rating scale: Not important at all (1) / Somewhat (2) / Moderately (3) / Very (4) / Extremely important (5) Follow-up question: "Can you tell me more about what makes a company's communication about ESG investments effective or ineffective in your view?"

The questionnaire underwent a thorough pilot testing process to ensure its effectiveness and reliability. Initially, a group of five participants, representative of the target population but not included in the final study, were interviewed using the draft questionnaire in Thai. These participants provided feedback on question clarity, relevance, and overall interview experience. The researcher also noted observations on participant reactions and timing. Based on this feedback and observations, the questionnaire was revised, with questions being reworded, reordered, added, or removed as necessary. A second round of pilot testing with three new participants was conducted to verify the effectiveness of the revisions. After final minor adjustments, the questionnaire was finalized in both Thai and English. This rigorous process aimed to maintain the integrity of the research objectives while ensuring the questionnaire was user-friendly and effective in eliciting the desired information from participants.

### **2.3 Data collection**

Data collection for this study took place from May to mid-July 2024. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes per participant. To accommodate participant preferences and ensure maximum comfort, interviews were conducted through a mix of video conferencing and in-person meetings, depending on the convenience of each participant. In-person interviews were held at quiet place or their workplace corner if available. While online interviews used secure video conferencing platforms. The semi-structured interviews followed a prepared questionnaire, which guided the conversation while allowing for flexible exploration of topics as they arose. Participants volunteered their time and insights without any monetary incentives, demonstrating a genuine interest in contributing to the research on ESG investments and greenwashing awareness. Overall, the level of cooperation from participants was high. They showed genuine interest in the topic and were generally forthcoming with their thoughts and experiences. Most participants engaged actively in the discussions, often providing detailed responses and examples. In a few cases, additional probing questions were necessary to elicit more comprehensive answers.

The data collected from these interviews was deemed sufficient for the study’s objectives. The responses provided rich, in-depth insights into participants’ awareness of greenwashing and their decision-making processes regarding ESG investments. The variety of perspectives gathered allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the research questions. It was essential to stress the importance of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity during these interviews, as well as highlighting the advantages of taking part in the research. Interview recordings were captured via audio recording devices, then fully transcribed word-for-word, and subsequently de-identified to safeguard participant privacy. Through this approach, the study aimed not just to gather data, but to weave a tapestry of understanding. By fostering trust and flexibility, the study hoped to paint a vivid picture of greenwashing awareness among Thai retail investors, one insightful interview at a time.

### **2.4 Data analysis**

The data recordings from retail investors were meticulously transcribed and subsequently translated into English. The collected interview data underwent a comprehensive qualitative analysis process using thematic analysis with a deductive approach. This method was chosen to systematically identify, analyze, and interpret patterns of meaning within the dataset. The analysis process began with a thorough familiarization of the data, where researchers carefully read through all interview transcripts.

Following this, a deductive approach was applied, using predetermined themes based on the research questions and existing literature on greenwashing and ESG investments. This approach allowed for a focused examination of the data while remaining open to emerging themes. Human text-based data coding was conducted using Microsoft Word. Researchers utilized the comment and highlighting features in Word to mark relevant text segments and assign codes. This method allowed for a detailed, line-by-line analysis of the transcripts, ensuring that contextual nuances were captured. Codes were then grouped into broader themes, with researchers paying careful attention to the relationships between different codes and themes. The coding process was iterative, with researchers regularly reviewing and refining the codes and themes to ensure consistency and accuracy. To enhance reliability, multiple researchers independently coded a subset of the data, followed by collaborative discussions to resolve any discrepancies and reach consensus on the final coding framework. The findings from the qualitative data were subsequently discussed in a descriptive manner, highlighting the implications of greenwashing awareness among investors in the context of sustainable finance.

Alongside with a scaling assessment component utilizing a structured test based on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale assessment, comprising five questions, was designed to evaluate participants' ability to discern between genuine ESG claims and potential greenwashing tactics. The questions were formulated based on guidelines established by The Office of the Securities and Exchange Commission (2022) for fund managers regarding appropriate language use in promoting Sustainable and Responsible Investing Funds.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Results

The study encompassed a diverse cohort of participants, with ages ranging from 26 to 51 years (median age: 39.5 years). Educational attainment was notably high, with 73% of participants holding graduate degrees and the remaining 27% possessing undergraduate qualifications. The occupational distribution was heavily skewed towards employment, with 97% of participants being employees and only 3% identifying as business owners.

Income levels varied considerably among the participants, total income after tax, the findings indicate that a considerable majority of participants, specifically 3% (1 individual), reported a monthly income between 25,000 and 45,000 baht. A smaller proportion of participants fell into the next income bracket: 7% (2 individuals) earned between 45,001 and 65,000 baht. 17% (5 individuals) earned between 65,001 and 85,000 baht, and 23 % (7 individuals) earned between 85,001 and 100,000 baht. Notably, a significant portion, 50% (15 participants), reported a monthly income exceeding 100,000 baht. These results provide valuable insights into the financial profiles of the surveyed group, which may significantly influence their financial behaviors and preferences.

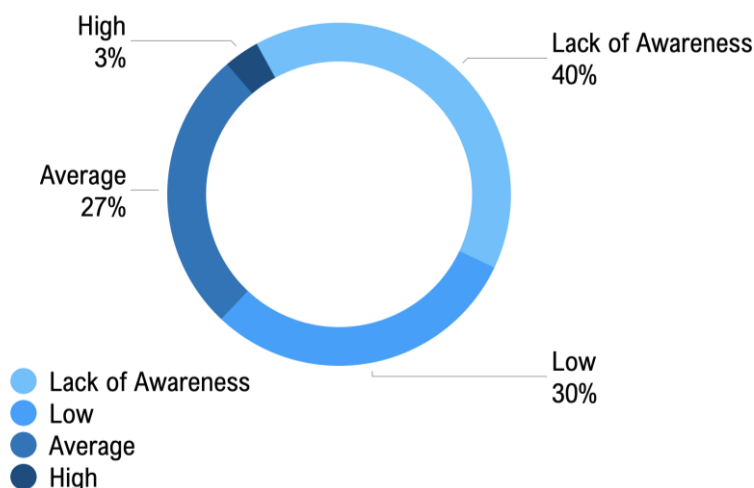
**Table 1.** Demographic data (N=30)

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	10	33%
Female	20	67%
Age		
25-30 years	2	7%
31-40 years	15	50%
41-50 years	12	40%
>51 years	1	3%
Education		
Graduate	8	27%

**Table 1.** Demographic data (N=30) (cont.)

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Post-Graduate	22	73%
Occupation		
Employee	29	97%
Businessowner	1	3%
Income (baht)		
25,000 - 45,000	1	3%
45,001- 65,000	2	7%
65,001-85,000	5	17%
85,001-100,000	7	23%
>100,000	15	50%
Investment experiences		
> 1 years	6	20 %
1-5 years	6	20 %
6-10 years	8	27%
> 10 years	10	33%

The findings reveal a diverse spectrum of investment experience among the participants. Specifically, 20% (6 individuals) reported less than one year of investment experience, while an equivalent proportion of 20% (6 participants) indicated between one and 5 years of experience. A slightly larger segment, comprising 27% (8 participants), fell within the 6-10 years' experience range. Notably, a significant portion, constituting 33% (10 individuals), possessed more than 10 years of investment experience. Investment behaviors among participants demonstrated significant heterogeneity, investors who actively managed their portfolios throughout the year. A substantial proportion employed a Dollar-Cost Averaging (DCA) strategy, characterized by regular, fixed-interval investments irrespective of market conditions. This approach was particularly prevalent among those who conceptualized investing as a long-term wealth accumulation tool. Conversely, another segment adopted a more intermittent investment approach, making larger but less frequent investments. These investors often strategically timed their investments to coincide with tax incentives, typically investing once or twice annually to maximize tax benefits associated with specific investment products. Notably, investment behaviors were strongly influenced by tax considerations across all income levels. Participants consistently demonstrated acute awareness of the tax implications of their investments, with many timings' substantial investments towards the end of the tax year to optimize tax benefits. The study also revealed an interesting intersection between tax incentives and sustainable investing, with the appeal of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) funds often amplified when offered as tax-advantaged products, effectively combining financial incentives with sustainable investing objectives.



**Figure 2.** Level of Greenwashing Awareness of Participants(N=30)

The results of this assessment revealed a significant disparity in greenwashing awareness among Thai retail investors. In Figure 1, the study categorizes investor-specific characteristics into four types: This distribution underscores a substantial knowledge gap in the market, potentially leaving many investors vulnerable to greenwashing practices in their sustainable investment decisions.

Investors with a Lack of Awareness, a significant portion, 40% (12 out of 30) of participants, demonstrated a complete lack of awareness or knowledge about greenwashing. This group either had never encountered the term or possessed only a limited understanding of the concept, underscoring a substantial knowledge gap within the investor population.

Investors with a Low Awareness, a considerable proportion of participants (30%, 9 out of 30) exhibited basic awareness of greenwashing, recognizing the term and its general implications in sustainable investing. However, this awareness was often superficial, with these investors demonstrating a rudimentary understanding of the concept without fully grasping its nuances or associated risks.

Investors with an Average Awareness, the largest group of participants (27%, 8 out of 30) displayed an average level of awareness. This suggests a more developed understanding of the concept, including some knowledge of specific greenwashing practices and their implications for sustainable investments. However, their comprehension may still lack the depth required for sophisticated analysis of greenwashing tactics.

Investors with a High Awareness, a minimal subset of participants (3%, 1 out of 30) demonstrated an advanced level of awareness. This individual showed a more substantial comprehension of greenwashing practices and their potential impact on investment decisions, indicating a nuanced understanding of the issue.

These findings highlight a considerable disparity in greenwashing awareness among Thai retail investors. While approximately 30% of participants have some level of familiarity with the concept, ranging from average to high, a significant portion remains unaware and low of greenwashing practices. This distribution underscores the clear need for targeted educational initiatives to bridge the knowledge gap and enhance investors' understanding of greenwashing tactics and their implications in the context of sustainable investing. The relatively small proportion of investors with high level of awareness further emphasizes the importance of developing more comprehensive and accessible information resources to elevate overall investor knowledge in this crucial area of sustainable finance.

## 3.2 Discussions

### 3.2.1 Understanding of greenwashing awareness amongst Thai retail investors

This study examines the complex landscape of greenwashing awareness among Thai retail investors. The findings reveal varied levels of greenwashing awareness across different demographic groups, highlighting the intricate relationship between investment experience, socioeconomic factors, and the ability to discern greenwashing practices. The findings of this study offer insights into the level of greenwashing awareness among Thai retail investors within the context of sustainable investment.

The analysis reveals that a majority of Thai retail investors (70%) demonstrate a lack to low level of awareness and the 30% demonstrate average to high of awareness regarding greenwashing practices, exhibited low awareness amongst Thai retail investors. Which aligns with Zhang's (2024) [9] observation that the awareness and monitoring of greenwashing among retail investors in developing country remain largely unexplored in many contexts. The Thai case study provides empirical evidence to support this claim. This lack of awareness is particularly pronounced among less experienced investors, suggesting a potential generational and educational divide in sustainable investing knowledge. Moreover, a complex interplay between occupation, income, and greenwashing awareness, the business owner's high awareness level, coupled with their high-income status, presents an intriguing case. However, the limited representation of business owners in the sample (n=1) precludes definitive conclusions about a broader relationship between business ownership and enhanced greenwashing awareness. Additionally, among Thai retail investors who are employees, the varied awareness levels across different income brackets suggest that income alone may not be a determining factor in greenwashing awareness. The absence of high awareness in this group, despite some members sharing the same high-income bracket as the business owner, further complicates the picture. This disparity hints at the potential influence of factors beyond income, such as educational background, professional experience, or personal interest in sustainable investing. While previous studies have shown a growing awareness of greenwashing in Europe İbrahim Topal (2019) [10], Thai retail investors reveal highlighting a notable disconnect between global trends and investor knowledge. This research suggests that Thai retail investors significantly lag behind their Western counterparts. This disparity is particularly striking given the increasing number of ESG funds and products available in Thailand, as noted by Adireksombat (2023) [11].

Moreover, in context of this study shown that awareness of greenwashing and investment experience is complex and non-linear. Investors with over 10 years of experience display a relatively even distribution across awareness levels, with a slight skew towards lack of awareness and average awareness. It may support the study stated that consumers tend to trust and use products labelled as environmentally friendly, highlighting the potential vulnerability of investors to similar claims in financial products by Dr. Sudhadhara Samal (2023) [12]. This unexpected finding challenges the assumption that extensive experience necessarily correlates with heightened awareness of contemporary investment issues like greenwashing. The presence of high awareness exclusively within this group, albeit in small numbers, indicates that while long-term experience can potentially lead to sophisticated understanding, it is not a guarantee. In the other hand, personal values related to sustainability showed a strong correlation with greenwashing awareness. As awareness levels increase, the influence of personal values becomes more pronounced, suggesting that fostering strong personal convictions about sustainability could be a key driver in enhancing greenwashing awareness and critical evaluation of sustainable investment claims. This aligns with Massazza's (2021) [13] research, which found that retail investors are motivated by personal expression and alignment with values when investing in sustainable assets. While this study distributes of greenwashing awareness among different investment experiences and income groups, it highlights the complexity of these relationships. The findings emphasize the importance of considering multiple demographic factors in understanding and addressing greenwashing awareness in the context of sustainable investing.



### ***3.2.2 The impact of awareness of greenwashing on investment decision***

This study endeavours to elucidate the relationship between awareness of greenwashing practices and the investment decisions of Thai retail investors. Unexpectedly, the study found no direct link between Thai retail investors' degrees of awareness of greenwashing and their changes in investing decision or practice. There are no appreciable shifts in the current investing strategies were seen across these categories, despite a range of knowledge levels, from lack of knowledge to average degree of awareness. Regardless of their level of awareness, participants consistently showed no variation in their investment behaviours. A crucial finding from this study reveals a significant the alignment from the study of Dr. Rajsee Joshi, (2014) [14] observation that awareness of green finance products does not invariably lead to investment in such products underscores the complexity of factors influencing sustainable investment decisions. This complexity is further emphasized by findings in this study on the interplay between awareness and investment decision.

Also, the primary reason is investors heavily dependent on their investment income for financial stability may prioritize short-term profitability over long-term sustainability concerns. This profit-centric focus could potentially lead to reduced attention to greenwashing practices, as immediate financial returns take precedence. Conversely, our findings indicate that individuals with diversified income sources and a robust financial foundation may be more inclined to consider the broader implications of their investments, including sustainability factors. Meanwhile, the study revealed that 47% of Thai retail investors rely on the information provided by their trusted sources, such as friends and family, rather than conducting their own extensive research. This reliance highlights the importance of social networks in building confidence and suggesting that these social influencers influence their investment choices. Furthermore, observation from the study shown the role of internet information and financial influencers in online platforms in shaping investment decisions has become increasingly significant in the digital age (Wissem Ajili Ben Youssef, 2024) [15]. The study indicates that online review and social interactions can heavily influence individual investors, often leading them to replicate the investment decisions of those they perceive as knowledgeable or sophisticated. For instance, the opinion from peer investor who appear financially savvy are particularly impactful, especially on social trading platforms where followers may lack the expertise to critically assess the information presented.

This reliance on internet postings underscores the phenomenon of herding behaviour, where investors imitate the actions of others, often disregarding their own research or analysis. Consequently, while the internet provides a wealth of information, it can also lead to decisions driven more by sentiment and social influence than by sound financial and sustainability principles of sustainable investment. This dynamic illustrates that trust and confidence are not only foundational to individual investment decisions but also play a significant role in shaping the broader investment landscape, especially as investors navigate the complexities of sustainable finance.

### ***3.2.3. The influence of investment decisions among Thai retail investors government policies and incentives***

The introduction of tax incentives for ESG investments in Thailand highlights the complex interplay between government policy, retail investor behaviour, and sustainable investing. The influential relationship between government policy and the incentives provided is a key driver of sustainable investment in Thailand, particularly highlighted by the recent establishment of the Thailand ESG Fund (TESG). This fund, which offers tax deductions for individual taxpayers investing in sustainable practices, has been shown to significantly influence Thai retail investors' decision-making processes which is aligned with the study Dr. Rajsee Joshi they would prefer to invest / increase their investment in Green Investment Products if they were incentivized. A study indicates that all participants' investment in ESG primarily due to the tax incentives associated with

the TESG, which allows investors to deduct up to 30% of their income, capped at 300,000 baht per year, provided they hold the investment for a minimum of eight years (SEC, 2023) [16].

Highlighted on the result, there's a risk that investors may prioritize short-term tax benefits over genuine ESG principles, potentially leading to market volatility if funds are withdrawn when incentives expire, or more profitable opportunities arise elsewhere. This scenario underscores the challenges policymakers face in balancing financial attractiveness with meaningful sustainability progress. It also highlights the need for robust investor education, comprehensive monitoring mechanisms, and the development of a mature ESG investing ecosystem. Moreover, the impact of trust in term of decision-making on Thai retail investor confidence is further emphasized by the acknowledgment of third-party verification as a critical factor which aligned with (Makarabhiromya, 2022) [17]. The effectiveness of such policies in driving lasting change in investor behaviour and achieving sustainability outcomes remains to be seen, making this an important area for ongoing research and policy evaluation in Thailand and other emerging markets.

### ***3.2.4 Implications for stakeholders***

The findings of this research on greenwashing awareness among Thai retail investors have far-reaching implications for various stakeholders in the sustainable investment ecosystem. For fund managers, the study emphasizes the critical need to prioritize genuine sustainability efforts and transparent communication to build trust and maintain competitiveness. Regulators are called upon to establish robust frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to combat greenwashing, ensuring the integrity of the sustainable investment market. Thai retail investors are encouraged to become more informed and vigilant in their investment decisions, critically evaluating sustainability claims. The sustainable investment market in Thailand faces pressure to adapt by promoting verifiable, genuinely sustainable products to meet the growing demand for responsible investments. This research underscores the importance of collaboration among all stakeholders to foster a transparent, accountable, and thriving sustainable investment ecosystem that aligns with Thailand's Sustainable Development Goals. As awareness of greenwashing increases, these collective efforts will be crucial in shaping a more responsible and sustainable financial landscape in Thailand.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

- **At the main objective of this study**

Regarding this study exploring in can be conclude that the majority of Thai retail investors' greenwashing awareness level is low, with 70% (21 out of 30) exhibiting a lack of or low. This knowledge gap potentially leaves Thai retail investors vulnerable to greenwashing practices in their investment decisions. Moreover, the study found no significant correlation between demographic factors and greenwashing awareness levels, challenging assumptions about the relationship between education or income and understanding of complex financial concepts. Unquestionably, there is unrelated between greenwashing awareness and investment decision, as no significant changes in investment behaviours were observed across different levels of greenwashing awareness. This suggests that awareness alone may not be sufficient to drive alterations in investment strategies, pointing to the influence of other factors such as financial incentives and social influences. The study also highlighted the significant role of external influencers in shaping investment decisions. Social networks, online information, government policies, and third-party assurances all emerged as important factors influencing Thai retail investors' choices in sustainable investing. Notably, government initiatives like the Thailand ESG Fund (TESG) and its associated tax incentives have substantially impacted investment decisions. In conclusion, while Thai retail investors show low levels of greenwashing awareness and the impact of this awareness on investment decisions is complex and not straightforward. The findings emphasize the need for comprehensive educational initiatives, critical thinking skills development, and policy interventions to enhance awareness and translate it into informed investment action.

- **Limitation and recommendation for future research**

(1) The relatively small sample size of 30 investors, while potentially adequate for qualitative insights, may constrain the robustness of quantitative analyses. This limitation could impact the study's ability to achieve high confidence levels and statistical significance in its findings.

(2) Expanding the scope of research to include diverse stakeholders, such as institutional investors and fund manager will provide a more comprehensive understanding of greenwashing awareness and sustainable investment trends. Tracking changes over time will allow researchers to assess how perceptions and behaviors evolve in response to new regulations and market developments.

(3) To build upon the current research, which is still in the early stages of understanding ESG funds in Thailand, future studies should consider broader demographic studies, longitudinal approaches, investigations into the impact of regulatory frameworks, and comparative analyses between Thailand and other countries with similar economic and environmental contexts.

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