



## **Determining the Popularity and Effectiveness of Green Marketing in Kenyan University Students Market Group**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Green Marketing comprises building lucrative customer relationship with care and concern on the environment. It aims at reducing the undesirable effects of the organization's activities on the environment and making the entire process of production to supply of products eco-friendly. Nearly all the institutions, organizations, and companies across the globe are engaging in the process but unconscious of the results which the green marketing campaigns are generating. This research aimed at studying the effectiveness of green marketing by firms on specific consumer group. The study explores Kenyan University students-market age group 20-25. Excel was used in the study to bring out the required information and make conclusions. The findings revealed a high

degree of unawareness amongst Kenyan University market group under study regarding the green marketing. Besides, majority of the University students-market age group 20-25 were concerned about the value of brand of the product rather than the product's price and its impact on the environment. A similar pattern was seen from students in all the universities studied. The study concludes that green marketing was not popularly and effectively used among university students as it was thought to be.

**Key words:** Green marketing, Sustainability, Green advertising, sustainable development

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The previous decades were characterized by increased threats of climate change. As a result, there were increased concerns in

relation to degradation of the environment, and misuse of natural resources globally (Han & Hwang, 2017). In response to these augmenting concerns, companies increasingly resolved to incorporate “green-practices” into their businesses and advertising efforts.

Amongst such efforts, green marketing or advertising has stimulated the promotion of environmental sustainability for regulators, consumers, educators, NGOs, and other stakeholders. It has quickly expanded across numerous industries. This was evident in the United States of America where the consumers started to pay more and closer attention to the ecological impacts of their actions, (Leonidou et. al., 2011). In a report by the International Trade Centre of 2017, 88% of the Americans affirmed that it is important to take care of the earth and, besides, 52% suggested that the government should be responsible for the protection of the environment.

These sentiments served to encourage businesses and corporations to use green marketing. The most effective highly ranked method of communicating green messages to consumers was found to be green advertising (Atkinson and Kim, 2015). Consequently, green marketing has been growing exponentially during the past 15 years. TerreChoice (2009), indicated that green advertising characterized over 10 percent of all the advertisements in the US in 2009 which had tripled amid 2006 and 2008. Therefore, green advertising has played an essential role in the promotion of the environmental image of companies and corporations besides the eco-friendly attributes of their commodities (Leonidou et al., 2011).

The market for sustainable commodities has constantly grown in parallel to the rise in ecological problems globally (Wang, Kirillova, and Lehto 2017). Consequently, green practices have become increasingly common in the marketing field. Amongst the practices, green marketing is often used to bridge the gap between pro-environmental attitudes among consumers and their pro-environmental intentions and behaviors according to Wang et. al., (2017). However, green marketing’s effectiveness and popularity to that end varies depending on the use of specific marketing tactics. Green marketing as one of the green innovations which has fostered numerous opportunities in the business environment today is faced with a major challenge in Kenya and the rest of the world. There is lack of standard or public consensus about what constitutes “green”. The lack of consensus by consumers, activists, regulators, marketers, and other influential people has slowed the growth of green products in Kenya and the rest of the world. This is because companies are often reluctant to promote their green attributes and thus consumers are often skeptical about the claims.

Although researchers have explored how the accessibility of green commodities impacts consumer behavior, research investigative of the ways to promote the commodities remains limited (Dahl et. al., 2016). Despite the growth in the number of green products, green marketing is on the decline as the primary sales pitch for products. To market effectively, green businesses need to market to three different audiences; Deep Green, Lazy Green, and Non-Green and the ideas must be approached differently. This is because each will have different trigger points that would move customers to buy.

## Statement of the Problem

In recent decades, marketing researchers have progressively concentrated on studying sustainable and pro-social ecologically friendly behaviors (Mick, 2006), frequently in response to the challenge of encouraging consumers to behave in sustainable ways (Luch et. al., 2010). There exists a gap in the study of green marketing in Kenya and especially in measurement of the effectiveness and awareness of green marketing and green products in the country's population respectively. As a result of the deficit of information relating to effectiveness of green marketing in Kenyan markets this paper sought to establish the popularity and the effectiveness of green marketing in the Kenyan market compared to other markets in the globe. The research studied Kenyan universities students market group.

## Research objectives

The following research questions guided the research to determine the popularity and effectiveness of green marketing in the Kenyan Market: (i) what percentage of the Kenyan Population can be identified as True Green or Light Green? (ii) What percentage of the Kenyan Population is willing to pay more for ecologically compatible products? (iii) What factors determined whether a new idea will be adopted or not adopted including the idealism of the shift towards "green"?

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Global Sustainability

According to Mangari et. al. (2016), the current unprecedented population growth and the consequent burden on food, energy, and natural resources has mirrored the

complexity of the global economy. Environmental stability has significantly been affected by the increased consumption and nearly every consumer is conscious of his/her collective impact on the planet (Han and Yoon, 2015). According to Goodland (1995), sustainability was found to impact on the expansion of human welfare through preservation of natural resources. For example, the sources of raw materials used for human needs and wants are not depleted, to prevent harm to humans. Response to consumer's awareness, initiatives that promote sustainability and ecological protection is receiving considerable attention and is shaping corporate, consumer, and personal behaviors (Jones et. al., 2016). Consumers and organizations alike are seeking to address the ultimate sustainability-related challenge that face current firms: striking a balance between maintaining the wellbeing of the ecosystem and fulfilling the needs of consumers and economic growth (Lozano 2015).

A worldwide paradigm shift in economic development has progressively underwritten the conception of sustainability as the interest in reducing the use of resources has increased tremendously in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Stone and Stone, 2011). In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, sustainability was introduced and since then it has paved way for emergence of the idealism in sustainable development. Idealism is a concept that is officially recognized in the World Conservation Strategy according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1980). Generally, sustainability has taken a holistic viewpoint of the environment, cultural, and social wellbeing of the local economies while assessing the success of development; which includes

development in the business world (Aronson, 2000).

With the 1987 Brundland Report that was officially titled “*Our Common Future*” which was seeking to establish a new era of sustainability, considering conservational issues, global debate on sustainability has, encountered a watershed moment (United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, 2007). The United Nations and the World Commission on Environment and Development, (1987) has defined sustainable development as social and economic growth that is able to meet the current needs without becoming unable to meet future needs. The report has paid exceptional attention to the responsible harvesting of marine and forest resources and has encouraged development that would not deplete the natural resources.

Following the publication of the report the United Nations organized summits and meetings aimed at promoting the sustainability of all key industries (Milne and Grey, 2013). Several of the meetings focused on particular industries such as the tourism industry and the transport industry as the prime sectors for more sustainable globalized development according to Barkemeyer et. al., (2014). In Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development was formed to continue the work started by the Brundland Commission. The Rio summit anchored the Agenda of the 21 Global Action Plan that delivered a framework for attaining sustainable development (Mowforth and Munt, 2009).

Industry and academic professional have reframed the sustainability concept to make sense at the corporate level. Particularly, they

emphasize that internal, besides, external stakeholders should be accountable for ensuring sustainability in political, social, economic, and cultural environments (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002). With this viewpoint, therefore, corporate sustainability refers to the level of corporate ability of business activities to conserve the environment while at the same time improving the standards of living for the people both inside and outside a certain company (van Marrewijk 2003). With this goal in mind, strategies to attain the corporate sustainability have emerged in education, business and economic agenda and have become significant guidelines as companies and institutions increasingly seek to integrate sustainability as a primary source of long-run competitive advantage (Jones et. al. 2016). Several institutions and companies are emphasizing sustainability-oriented efforts as a way of differentiating themselves from competitors and to reinforce their brand and corporate reputations (Jones et. al. 2016). Subsequently, the concept of sustainable firms reflects the increasing trend among stakeholders to evaluate the performance of an organization regarding not only economic prosperity but also the organization’s contribution to environmental quality and social justice (Elkington, 2014).

### Green Marketing and Advertising

As worldwide sustainability and interest in change of climate increase, corporations encounter the challenge of integrating environmental issues into their business strategies as indicated by Nidumolu et. al., (2009). Once a company has achieved this, the company must ensure it conveys it to the consumer. Subsequently, environmental and green marketing strategies now rank among the frequently discussed topics in academic

research on advertising (Hartmann et. al., 2015). The green marketing concept has significantly evolved and has even sparked significant social movement. Peattie, (1999), described green marketing as a holistic management process that seeks to identify, predict, and meet goals profitably while constantly addressing the needs of consumers and society.

Globally, companies and organizations have considered environmental issues as part of their business strategies while accounting to government regulations and other forces (Do Paco et. al., 2009). Such a consideration has responded to the heightened sense of accountability among consumers and the increasing tendency to make environmentally friendly purchases (Haanpaa, 2007). Ghosh, (2011), argued that effective marketing for green products can, however, appeal to consumers by applying good marketing principles. Green marketing messages universally address at least an environmental issue of interest to consumers besides the needs of the environment (Gheorghiu et. al. 2013).

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

A survey method was deemed fit for the study given the constraints during the period of the research. A random sample of 80 university students from 10 randomly selected Universities in Kenya took part in the study. The sample was representative of the target population by considering various population characteristics to eliminate bias. Therefore, the findings of this research could be generalized for the entire population.

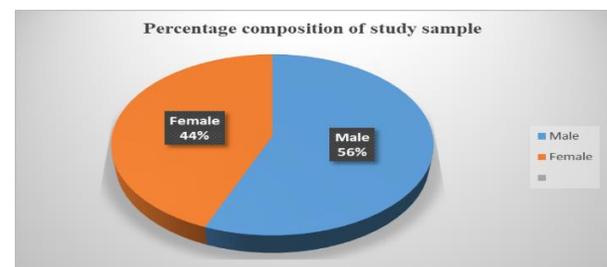
The study employed structured questionnaires to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaires were sent to the selected individuals via WhatsApp. Primary data collected by questionnaires was sorted, organized, analyzed, and presented using Microsoft Excel. Percentages, visual presentations, and descriptive statistics were computed and conclusions drawn from the analyzed data. The study was carried out with the following objectives in mind:

- i. To determine whether Kenyan university students were environmentally aware, and whether green marketing affects the buying behavior of the consumers.
- ii. To investigate whether Kenyan university students were conscious of the green marketing.
- iii. To examine whether the environmental efforts of companies convert into sales, and if not, what steps should be taken to make sure the efforts convert into sales.

### DATA ANALYSIS and FINDINGS

The data that was collected during the study was analyzed using Excel. The results are presented in this section.

#### Demographic Profile of Respondents



*Figure 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents*

Figure 2 above shows that 56% of the respondents in the study were male while 44% were female. A similar study conducted in India had 67.5% male respondents and 32.5% female respondents.

### Geographical Profile of Respondents

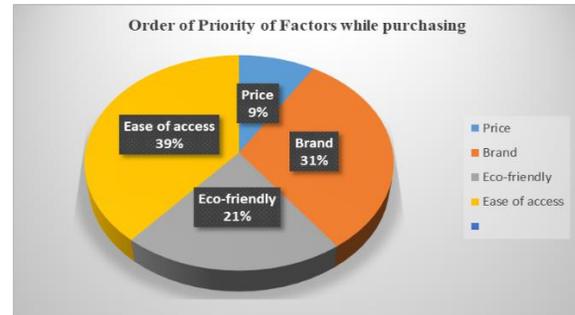
Table 1

*Distribution of Respondents with respect to University and Gender composition*

University	Number of students	Male	Female
Lukenya	8	62.50%	37.50%
SEKU	8	50%	50%
Machakos	8	75%	25%
Garissa	8	62.50%	37.50%
Nairobi	8	50%	50%
Strathmore	8	37.70%	62.50%
Nairobi	8	62.50%	37.50%
JOUST	8	75%	25%
KU	8	37.50%	62.50%
Chuka	8	50%	50%
		56.25%	43.75%

Table 2 shows the distribution of male and female respondents from the 10 Kenyan universities studied. In South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU), University of Nairobi and Chuka University, there were 50% male and female respondents. The institutions included both private (Not owned by the government) and public universities (Government owned). Generally, these were students from different cultural background and counties.

### Order of Priority of Factors while purchasing of goods

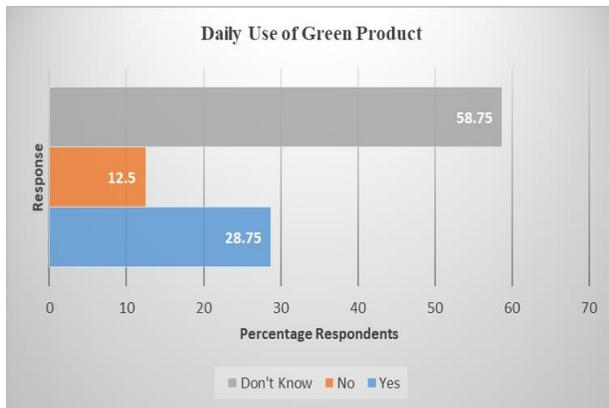


**Figure 2: Order of Priority of Factors while purchasing of goods**

The respondents were asked, which factor they considered as first priority while making purchases of any product. The factors were listed as Price, Brand, Eco-friendliness, and Ease of Access. Figure 3 shows that approximately 79% of the university students did not consider the ecological friendliness of the product as a first priority in their purchases. In this study, most of the students considered brand (39%) as the top decision factor for their purchases. Only a small proportion (21%) considered environmental sustainability. A similar study in India established that 75% of young adult university students in did not consider environment friendliness of products while deciding on purchases. The same study revealed that 45% of the students considered brand as the first decision factor of their purchases while 37.5% considered price. This research agrees with the findings of the study that only a small proportion of university students consider environmental factors to their purchasing decision.

### Use of Green Products in Life

The respondents were asked the question, “Do you use green products in your daily life?” The options for the responses were, Yes, No and I don’t know. The results of the responses are shown in Figure 4.

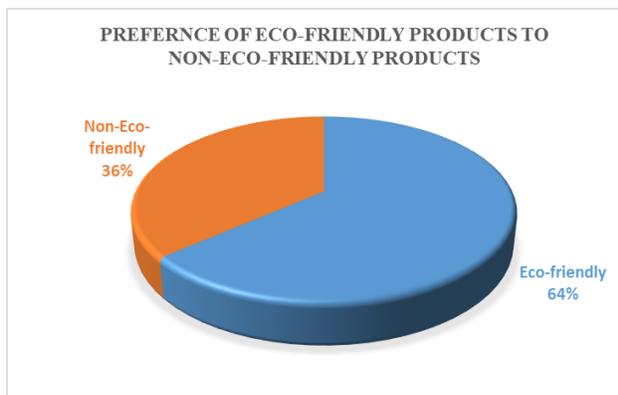


**Figure 3: Daily Use of Green Products**

From these statistics it is revealed that more than half (58.75%) of the respondents were unaware if they use green products in their daily life or not. This was found to be consistent with earlier research of comparative population in India that concluded that 52.5% of respondents was unaware of their daily use of green products.

**4.0 Preference of Eco-friendly Products**

The respondents were asked if given a choice between an environmentally friendly product and a non-environmentally friendly product, which one they would buy. While responding to the question, the respondents were asked to assume that the eco-friendly product was more expensive compared to the non-eco-friendly product. The pie chart below illustrates the results of the responses.



**Figure 4: Preference of Purchase**

Figure 5 reveals that given an opportunity to buy the products, 64% of the population would buy the environmentally friendly goods despite the price. 36% of the respondents would buy the non-eco-friendly products if they are cheaper compared to the eco-friendly one. This showed that a higher number of the respondents was willing to buy the eco-friendly goods despite irrespective of the price compared to non-eco-friendly products. A study carried out in America revealed that Americans were willing to pay 5-10% more for ecologically friendly products in 1989. By 1991, the ecologically conscious individuals were willing to pay 15-20 percent more for green products. Currently, 33.33% of Americans say that they would pay a little more for green products.

**Green Marketing Awareness**

The respondents were asked whether they were aware of the concept of green marketing. The responses were stated as Not Fully Aware, Fully Aware, and Not Aware. The results are shown in Figure 6.

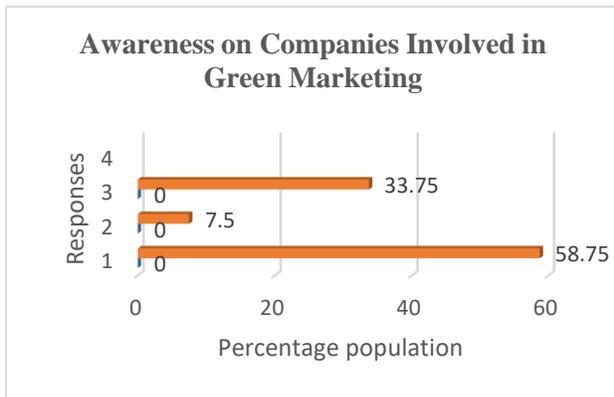


**Figure 5: Green Marketing Awareness**

Approximately three quarters (77%) of the surveyed population is not fully aware of green marketing. The population has just an idea about it. It is known that incomplete and

insufficient information leads to a lot of questions in mind which will ultimately prevent the consumer from purchasing green products. According to Mintel, a market researcher, around 12% of United States population is identified as True Greens. These are consumers who are fully aware and seek out and frequently buy green products. Another 68% is categorized as Light Greens, consumers who are fully aware of green products and buy them sometimes.

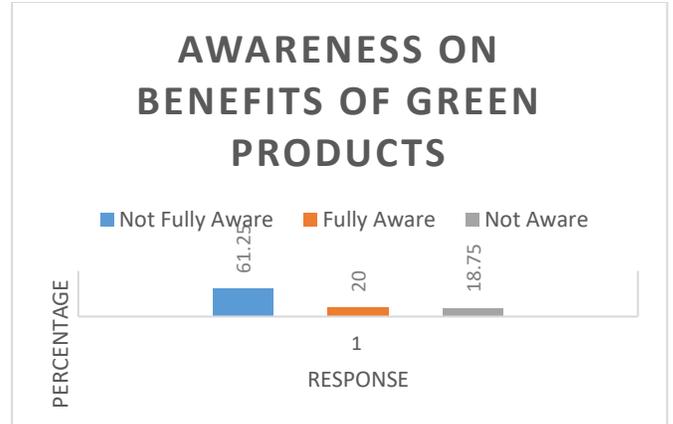
#### Awareness on Companies involved in Green marketing



*Figure 6: Awareness on Companies involved in Green Marketing*

Figure 7 displays that above half of the surveyed population is not aware about the companies involved in green marketing. Most of the population uses quite a number of products from morning to night but the populations are highly unaware of the being eco-friendly or not.

#### Awareness on Benefits of Green Products

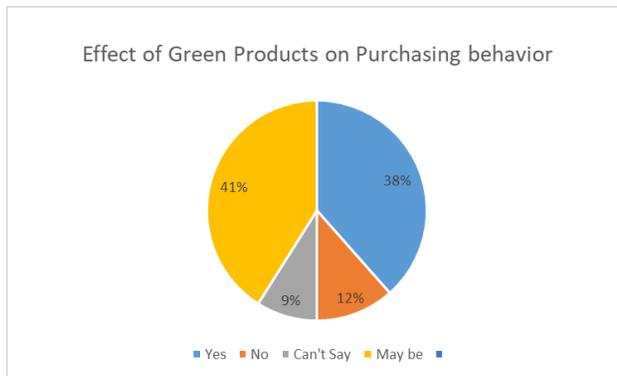


*Figure 7: Benefits of Green Marketing*

Figure 8 reveals a very high degree of unawareness amongst the university students about the benefits of ecological marketing. Majority of the target population have a perception that green product just involves only recycling waste or old goods and using them and taking care of environment. However, it has been observed that marketing is a very huge concept much beyond the above mentioned notions. More than 60% of the population is not fully aware of the benefits of green products.

#### Effect of Green Marketing on Purchasing Behavior

The respondents were asked the question, “Is your purchase behavior affected by green marketing campaign?” The responses were categories as Yes, No, Can’t say, and May be. The pie chart below illustrates the outcome.

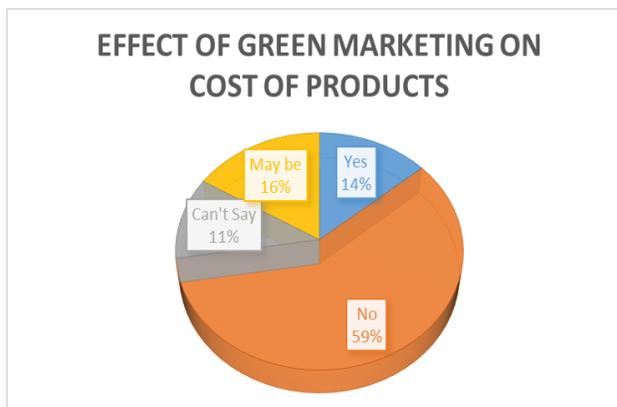


**Figure 8: Effect of Green Marketing on Purchasing Behavior**

About 38% of the respondents got influenced by the campaigns on green marketing by companies. Over 40% of the respondents were unaware about the effect generated on their purchase behavior by the green marketing campaigns by companies.

#### Effect of Green Products on Costs

The researcher sought to find out the effect of green products on costs. This was to determine whether green products have unnecessarily higher costs. The results are shown in the pie chart below.



**Figure 9: Effect of Green Products on Costs**

Nearly 60% of the respondents did not allude to the sentiments that green products unnecessarily had higher costs. This implies

that the majority of the students did not have that perception.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analysis of data presented above, the following findings have been made. Firstly, there was a high degree of unawareness amongst Kenyan University students market group regarding the idea of green marketing, its impacts in society and the benefits. This gross unawareness reveals the need for more environmental campaigns by organizations to be done. This is because unless a person is conscious of the green marketing concept, and its benefits, they cannot reap its benefits. Consequently, the purchase behavior of about 50% of the population surveyed was not influenced by the ecological marketing campaigns of the companies.

Secondly, there is more concern for brand than prices of commodities and eco-friendliness. Majority of the target population was concerned about the value of brand of the product rather than the product's price and its impact on the environment. Additionally, the population that cares for nature (eco-friendliness) would rather go for environmental friendly products than prices. This implies that once the big brands undertake green marketing on a large scale, they can create massive awareness among the university students. In this way, the big brand corporation can encash on this if they give preference to the factors in the order brand > Price > Ease of access/ Eco-friendliness.

The Kenyan Green Market needs to be more vigilant and effective to enhance the shift towards Green Innovation to provide quality,

green products to improve the wellbeing of the consumer and achieve development.

Lastly, all the students in the 10 universities studied had similar patterns in relation to purchase of eco-friendly products. This shows that students in the same age group demonstrate comparable patterns regardless of their geographic locations and culture.

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