DETERMINANTS OF THE ADOPTION OF GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES IN KENYAN FLORICULTURE INDUSTRY

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DETERMINANTS OF THE ADOPTION OF GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES IN KENYAN FLORICULTURE INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Organizations draw resources for their productive activities from the environment. It has been widely accepted that business are harnessing the environmental resources at a fast pace and their activities are posing a threat to the sustainability of the very environment they depend on. Green marketing a fairly new concept that strives to ensure that production, consumption and even disposal of products happens in a manner that is less harmful to the environment. The aim of this paper was to establish the determinants of the adoption of green marketing strategies in Kenya's floriculture industry. The specific objective was to determine the influence of stakeholder pressure and regulatory pressure on the adoption of green marketing strategies. An explanatory research design was employed where convenience sampling method was used to select 25 firms out of the 75 registered members of the Kenya Flower Council. Data obtained was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The Study established that both Stakeholder pressure and regulatory pressure have a significant influence on the adoption of green marketing strategies. It recommends that organizations ought to be proactive in environmental protection rather than reactive. And government should legislate and enforce environmental laws and policies.

Keywords: *Adoption of green marketing strategies, Stakeholder pressures, Regulatory pressures, Floriculture industry, Environment.*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study.

The Green Marketing concept is fairly new. Its origin can be traced back to the late 1980s and early 1990s (Laheri, 2014). According to the American Marketing Association, green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. It incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising (Mishra, 2010).

Green marketing includes greening products as well as greening firms. That is it requires that firms produce environmentally harmless or less harmful products and do so using less environmental detrimental processes (Prakash, 2002). Firms may choose to green their systems, policies and products due to economic and noneconomic pressures from their marketing environment or even non marketing environment pressures.

According to Thakur & Gumpta (2012) Environment is the most pulsating issue of the present time. Societies, governments, non-governmental organizations in addition to business organizations are focusing their attention to overcome the escalating environmental degradation like global warming, ozone depletion, solid waste, e-waste, air pollution etc. Humans are the very cause of environmental degradation. It has been widely accepted that business are harnessing the environmental resources at a fast pace and their activities like procurement, manufacturing, logistics and marketing are imposing a very negative impact on the environment. Number of environmental issues have been recognized and broadly studied over the past few decades. People all over the world are aware of the environmental issues and are very concerned with environmental problems.

According to Cronin (2012) firms have begun to notice the positive gains that can accrue to them through environmentally friendly marketing strategies and the potential pitfalls associated with non-environmentally friendly strategies. Going green is beginning to take root in boardrooms around the world. There is increased and a growing interest among top managers, stakeholders and academics regarding the adoption of green marketing strategies and its potential impact on the triple-bottom line. Firms are increasingly adhering to a triple-bottom line performance evaluation. That is evaluating an organizations performance on the basis of economic prosperity (i.e., profits), environmental quality (i.e., the planet), and social justice (i.e., people)

1.1.1 Floricultural Industry in Kenya.

Kenya is probably the strongest and most competitive of the African flower trading nations. Kenya has a good combination of climate and altitude, a progressively improving infrastructure, relatively low labour costs in a labour-intensive industry and outstanding freight and passenger air links to Europe, the Middle East and Asia. (Perry ,20ll)

The production of Kenyan cut flowers for the export market began in the mid-1960s. These exports, that initially served small niche markets, have witnessed an exponential expansion within the last two decades. The cut flower industry, with an estimated annual growth rate of 20%, increased its export volume from 19,807 to 52,106 tons between 1992 and 2002(Hale, 2005).

Cut flowers are an important export sector in Kenya. Next to their contribution to the gross domestic product and foreign exchange earnings, the commercial farms provide employment, housing, schools and hospitals, free to employees and their families. Losing the cut- flower business means over 25,000 workers and their dependence will lose everything (Mekonnen, Hoekstra & Becht, 2012)

However empirical literature has closely linked the floriculture sector in Kenya with environmental ills. For example the depletion of Lake Naivasha that many flower farms depend on for water supplies, has been linked to floricultural industry. As Owiti and Oswe (2007) observed that the onset of declining water levels in Lake Naivasha coincided with the commencement of floriculture and other related anthropogenic activities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem.

Green Marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmental safe. It strives to ensure that production, consumption and even disposal of products happens in a manner that is less harmful to the environment (Mohanasudaram, 2012). Green Marketing strategies would therefore refer to product modification, changes to production process, and improvements in packaging with intent of reducing the detrimental impact on the environment (Laheri, 2014).

Kenya is the third-largest exporter of cut flowers in the world -- an industry that generates billions of dollars per annum worldwide (Noury, 2011). According to the Kenya Flower Council (2014), 1.29% of Kenya’s National GDP is from the flower industry. Cut flowers are an important export sector in Kenya. Besides their contribution to the gross domestic product and foreign exchange earnings, the floriculture sector provide employment, housing, schools and hospitals, free to employees and their families

(Mekonnen, et al., 2012). As Noury (2012) observes, the industry supports the livelihoods of 50,000 to 60,000 people directly and 500,000 indirectly

The green revolution has received considerable acceptance in the USA and parts of Asia. For example in India, around 25% of the consumers prefer environmental-friendly products, and around 28% may be considered healthy conscious (Mohanasudaram, 2012). However, Kenya lags behind in the adoption of green marketing strategies. This reluctance to embrace pro environmental production approaches is creating doubt on the sustainability of the floriculture sector. Environmental issues such as water quality, greenhouse emissions, chemicals and exotic pests have been implicated as factors that pose a great challenge to the future of the industry (Kargbo, Mao & Wang, 2010).

The green revolution in Europe, where Kenya sells most of her floricultural products, is putting immense pressure on the Kenyan firms to conform or lose out. Consumers are aware of the global pattern of labor rights, occupational safety and health and environmental abuses and have pressed on for sustainable cultivation of flowers. This situation is worsened by new trend shows the cost of production is increasing while the overall consumption is declining (Kargbo et al., 2010).

The study addressed the following specific objectives:

1. To establish the effect of stake holder pressure on adoption of green marketing strategies in the Kenyan floricultural industry.
2. To determine the influence of regulatory pressure on the adoption of green marketing strategies in the Kenyan floriculture industry

Hypothesis 1

H_o: Stakeholder pressure is not significantly related to adoption of green marketing Strategies in the Kenyan floriculture sector.

Hypothesis 2

H_o: The Regulatory pressure is not significantly related to adoption to green marketing strategies in the Kenyan floriculture sector.

2. Literature Review

The Independent Variable;

2.1 Stake holder Pressure.

Isabelle et al. (2005) refers to stakeholder pressure as the concerns that stakeholders embrace about organizational activities and demand for their implementation by organizations. Various stakeholder communities are likely to exercise pressures on the organization and on each other in order to push forward their own values and norms. According to Zhu & Sarkis (2007) normative pressures cause organizations to conform to be perceived as more legitimate. Stakeholder theory suggests that the organization is managed by considering the often conflicting needs and interests of all relevant stakeholders (Miles & Covins, 2000). Stakeholder Theory is ideally suited to environmental marketing for it provides a process, allows the industrial marketer to develop an environmental marketing strategy that satisfies the goals of the firm and its stakeholders (Polonsky, 1995**)**

As Yu-Shu & Shing-Shiuan (2008) opines, Environmental protection groups usually attempt to replace government efforts and utilize public opinion to force business adoption of environmental management**.** The organizational response to a specific stakeholder would largely be influenced by its dependence on that stakeholder. Organizations are controlled by those stakeholders who comprise the most problematic dependencies. Even where strong organizational values and norms exist, they are often not sufficient to ensure responsible environmental behaviors. The discussion above could imply that marketers will engage in socially responsible behaviors only in the presence of stakeholder power. Marketers would then limit their responsibility initiatives to those issues of concern to the most powerful and visible stakeholder communities (Isabelle et al., 2005)

Floriculture industry in Kenya depends solely on foreign countries for both production materials and market for its products. According to Kargabo et al. (2010) producers in Kenya presently are net exporters of fresh flower products to and net importers of planting and production materials from The Netherlands. This dependency makes the customer market a key stakeholder.

According to Bansal and Roth (2000), stakeholders have been instrumental in inducing corporate ecological responsiveness. Consumers in the Netherlands (Kenya's main floricultural market) are increasingly demanding high quality products produced under best practices that would not compromise environmental safety. Consumers are aware of the global pattern of labor rights, occupational safety and health and environmental abuses and have pressed on for sustainable cultivation of flowers, these efforts have given birth to the establishment of best production practices and ethical measures in the industry (Kargabo et al., 2010)

2.2 Regulatory environment.

According to Bolo (2006) a country's policy and legal framework determines the actor behaviour, attitudes, and corporate culture thus helping to promote the habits and practices that are beneficial to the industry. The importance of legislation in inducing corporate ecological responsiveness has been widely recognized -Escalating penalties, fines, and legal costs have punctuated the importance of complying with legislation **(**Bansal et al 2000)

Although legislation both international and local is argued to be a strong determinant of enforcing desired organizational responses, it may fail to do so where there are loop holes that organizations can take advantage of. Tenenbaum (2002) observed that cut flowers have loose regulatory status in the importing countries because they are not edible crops and are exempted from regulations on pesticide residues; hence they are not inspected for residues.

Creation of Standard that products must meet is the most common regulatory approach in the flower industry. According Loone and Riisgaard (2011), the cut flower industry is a particularly interesting example of the emergence and proliferation of standards that seek to regulate the social and environmental conditions of production. In the flower industry, we have a standard landscape with many schemes existing in parallel. These standards differ in the way they seek to implement their objectives and in their impact on intended beneficiaries. However, within the more stringent standards there are different interpretations of how to raise the bar. **F**ocus then has to be on best production practices and enforcing legislations, conventions and policies that ensure clean environment (Kargabo et al., 2010).

Since the mid 1990's standards mostly covered technical issues such as chemical usage and environmental management. However, social components like standards relating to workers' welfare have been added recently. Most standards used have been conceived and formulated in Europe, but in recent years some standard initiatives emanate in producer countries. Over twenty different standards both international and local are in operation in the cut flower industry (Loone et al., 2011)

The Kenya Flower Council is also at the core of eco-certification initiatives. Kenya Flower Council (KFC) is a voluntary association of independent growers and exporters of cut-flowers and ornamentals, formed in 1996. KFC administers compliance through an internationally accredited KFC Code of Practice. KFC members account for about 60% of the flowers exported from Kenya (Kenya Flower Council, 2014). According to Perry (2011) a significant success of the KFC has therefore been the development of a widely adopted Code of Practice that is fully bench-marked to GlobalGAP and is undergoing a bench marking/mutual recognition process with various other standard setting bodies.

Besides the eco-certification, there are laws that attempt to protect the environment. One Such Law is the Water Act. The Act states that abstraction is permitted only during flood flow periods on condition that 90 days storage is provided. This law aims at encouraging producers to Store water during flood flow for use during low flow. However many of those authorized to abstract irrigation water during the flood flow do not have the requisite storage facilities. Though the Water Act regulates abstraction of lake water through permits the law does not specify the abstraction limit. This is characteristic of open access to lake water with a serious threat to sustainability (Mireri, 2005)

2.3 Dependent Variable- Adoption of green marketing strategies.

Corporation exists to fulfill the profit maximization objectives. Thus adoption of green marketing strategies would be greatly enhanced if firms were to see a direct relationship between environment management and profitability. Albertini (2013) in the study, “Does environmental management improve financial management? A meta-analytical review” concludes that the meta-analysis show, a positive relationship between Corporate Environmental Management and Corporate Financial Performance. The relationship between corporate environmental performance and financial performance has received a high degree of attention in research literature and the results are still contradictory. While Most of the findings have shown that environmental performance improves financial performance, others have suggested that the relationship is neutral or even negative.

A study by Nath et al. (2013) on consumer adoption of green products: Modeling the enablers concluded that focus more efforts towards improving the literacy level of the masses in order to increase the awareness towards environmental issues. He argues that Legal enforcement such as compulsory environmental certification and product labeling should be introduced and financial incentives given to enhance adoption of green products.

A study by Luna et al. (2010) on stakeholder pressure and environmental productivity provides empirical evidence that competitive advantage expectations have a moderating effect on the impact of stakeholder pressure on environmental proactivity.

According to Dhar & Das (2007) although a lot of pressure is exerted on organization to adopt green marketing strategies, green marketing requires that consumers want a cleaner environment and be willing to "pay" for it. It must also be noted that the industrial buyer also has the ability to pressure suppliers to green their activities. Thus an environmental committed organization may not only produce goods that have reduced their detrimental impact on the environment, but may also pressure their suppliers to behave in a more environmentally "responsible" fashion. Kiran (2012) concurs; he undertook a study on Opportunity and Challenges of Green Marketing with special references to Pune that concluded that green marketing should not neglect the economic aspect of marketing. Marketers need to understand the implications of green marketing. Green marketing to some extent strengthen company's image in the mind of respondents that is very much clear from trustworthiness

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used the explanatory research design. According to Kothari (2004), explanatory research design is suitable for those studies that seek to establish relationship between variables.

3.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

In this study the target population was the flower farms registered by the Kenya Flower Council (KFC). As of September 2014, KFC had a producer membership of 75 flower farms situated throughout the country, (Kenya Flower Council, 2014). The target respondents consisted of 25 operations managers of 25 farms selected using convenience sampling. Operations managers are ideal because they are more knowledgeable with the farms operations.

3.3 Research Instruments and Data Collection

Primary date was collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires were composed of semi structured questions. The questions provided a set of alternative solutions for the respondent to fill the one that best suits their opinion using a five-point likert scale. The questionnaires were used to measure the influence of stakeholder and regulatory pressures on adoption of green marketing strategies in the floriculture industry in Kenya. Once the questionnaires were received they were coded and edited for completeness and consistency. SPSS was then used for data analysis using both descriptive and inferential statistical data analysis.

Correlation was used to analyze the degree of relationship between stakeholder pressures and regulatory pressures with labour productivity. The study used Pearson's moment correlation (r) to determine if there is a significant relationship and to show the degree of relationship between the variables. The hypothesis testing was done at 5% level of significance. Regression analysis was used to find out if the independent variables-stakeholder pressure and regulatory pressure, predicts the dependent variable-adoption of green marketing strategies.

4. Results and Discussions.

The response rate was 80% was adequate. The Objective of the study was to establish the effect of stake holder pressure on adoption of green marketing strategies in the Kenyan floricultural industry in Kenya.

4.1 Correlation between Adoption of Green Marketing Strategies with Stakeholder Pressure and Regulatory Pressure.

Correlations

		Stakeholder pressure	Regulatory Pressure	green marketing strategy
Stakeholder pressure	Pearson Correlation	1	-.180	.309
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.447	.185
	N	20	20	20
Regulatory environment	Pearson Correlation	-.180	1	.509*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.447		.022
	N	20	20	20
green marketing strategy	Pearson Correlation	.309	.509**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.185	.022	
	N	20	20	20

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1: Correlation Stakeholder Pressure & Regulatory pressure

Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine if there was a significant positive association and to show the degree of relationship between the variables. The results show that there is a positive significant linear relationship between regulatory pressures and adoption of green marketing strategies. In addition there exists a weak positive relationship between stakeholder pressures and adoption of green marketing strategies.

4.2 Regression Analysis between Adoption of Green Marketing Strategies and Stakeholder pressure and Regulatory Pressure.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.652[a]	.425	.358
1	.652a	.425	.358

a. Predictors: (Constant), Regulatory pressure, Stakeholder pressure

Table 2: Regression analysis with Regulatory Pressure and Stakeholder Pressure

Table 2 above shows that regulatory pressure and stakeholder pressure have an R square value of 0.425. This implies that 42.5% of the variations in the adoption of green marketing strategies are explained by regulatory and stakeholder pressures, while 57.5% are explained by other factors not captured in the model. Stakeholder and regulatory pressure play a significant role in explaining adoption of green marketing strategies, and presence of these pressures in the floriculture industry motivates farms to engage in environmental friendly production practices.

4.3 Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	45.428	2	22.714	6.292	.009[b]
	Residual	61.372	17	3.610		
	Total	106.800	19			

a. Dependent Variable: green marketing strategies.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Regulatory pressure, Stakeholder pressure

Table 3: ANOVA

From Table 3 above, the p-value of 0.009, which is less than the level of significance of 0.05, shows that a significant linear relationship exists between Adoption of green marketing strategies and stakeholder and regulatory pressure. This findings concur with Zhu (2007):): Bansal and Roth(2000): Isabelle et al., (2005) who argued that organizations would adopt green marketing strategies in response to stakeholder pressure.

4.4 Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-5.572	7.053		-.790	.440
	Stakeholder pressure	.352	.159	.414	2.215	.041
	Regulatory pressure	.918	.294	.584	3.124	.006

a. Dependent Variable: Green marketing strategy.

Table 4; Coefficients

From the hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

H_o: Stakeholder pressure is not significantly related to adoption of green marketing Strategies in the Kenyan floriculture sector.

H_1. Stakeholder pressure is significantly related to adoption to green marketing strategies in the Kenyan floriculture sector.

From Table 4 above; the p-value for the stakeholder pressure is 0.041 which is less than 0.05; we therefore reject H_o and accept H_1 that there is a significant relationship between stakeholder pressure and adoption of green marketing strategies.

Hypothesis 2

H_o: The Regulatory pressure is not significantly related to adoption to green marketing strategies in the Kenyan floriculture sector.

H_1: Regulatory Pressure is significantly related to the adoption of green marketing strategies in the Kenyan floriculture sector.

From Table 4 above since the p-value for the regulatory pressure is 0.006 which is less than 0.05, we reject H_o and accept H_1 that there is a significant relationship between regulatory pressure and adoption of green marketing strategies.

4.5 Model fit.

When the model was fitted to find out whether the independent variables of stakeholder pressure and regulatory pressure predicts the dependent variable adoption of green marketing strategy. It was found to have a goodness of fit and therefore the mode is significant as shown by table 4. The Beta coefficients are both significant at 0.05 significance level. Additionally, the b-coefficient also tells to what degree each predictor affects outcome. It is clear from the modes that regulatory pressure throws in more weight to adoption of green marketing strategies than the stakeholder pressure. This differs with the findings by Rivera-Camino, (2007) who observed that among the non-market stakeholders, legal stakeholders have the weakest influence on green marketing strategies. If the b-values are substituted in the equation below the model can be defined as follows

$$\boldsymbol{Y = -5.572 + 0.352X_1 + 0.918X_2 + e}$$

Where Y = Adoption of green marketing strategies

X_1 Stakeholder pressure

X_2 Regulatory pressure

e Error term

The findings agree with other researchers who have found a positive and statistically significant association between adoption of green marketing strategies and stakeholder pressure.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion.

The study sought to establish the effect of stakeholder pressure and regulatory pressure on adoption of green marketing strategies by firms in Kenya's floriculture sector. Based on the findings, with the P-value of 0.041 and 0.006 for stakeholder pressure and regulatory pressure respectively, the study concludes that stakeholder pressure and regulatory pressure significantly affect adoption of green marketing strategies. Thus the presence of stakeholder pressure and regulatory pressure has helped in adoption of environmental friendly production practices.

5.2 Recommendations.

The study makes the following recommendations based on the findings

1. Stakeholders should actively engage in putting the organization in check. However managers should be proactive in environmental management rather than reactive. Organization should develop more of a stakeholder orientation rather than a narrow customer orientation.
2. Government should legislate laws, come up with policies and regulations that protects the environment. Government should ensure proper policing and enforcement of such laws.

5.3 Suggestions for further Research.

The study found that stakeholder pressure and regulatory pressure have a significant effect in adoption of green marketing strategies. However the study lumped together various stakeholder groups like customers, international market, suppliers, Non-governmental Organizations, environmental pressure groups and local community. There is therefore need for further research into the effect of each of this stakeholder groups independently.

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