

Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management



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Maureen Muyoka Wakasala, Dr. Moses Miricho & Dr. Monicah Wandolo

ISSN: 2706-6592

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Maureen Muyoka Wakasala

Post Graduate Student, Department of Hospitality & Tourism, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Corresponding Author Email: wakmau@gmail.com

Dr. Moses Miricho

Senior Lecturer, Department of Hospitality & Tourism, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Email: mnmiricho@gmail.com

Dr. Monicah Wandolo

Senior Lecturer, Department of Hospitality & Tourism, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Email: wandolo.monica@ku.ac.ke

How to cite this article: Wakasala M, M., Miricho M., & Wandolo M. (2025). Contribution of Green Practices On Consumer Buying Behavior in 4-5 Star Restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*. Vol 8(1) pp. 68-84 <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t2511>

Abstract

There is an exponential increase in consumer concerns over green practices due to environmental problems occurring. Green practices involves a company engaging in activities or actions that protect the environment from pollution and preserve natural resources by reducing its carbon emissions. Consumer buying behavior refers to the activities and experiences of restaurant guests who engage in purchasing, consuming and disposing of goods and services. The purpose of this study was to examine the contribution of green practices on consumer buying behavior in 4-5- star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design where a sample size of 19 restaurants were sampled in Nairobi County. Data collection techniques were questionnaires, observation schedules and secondary data sources, which were newspapers, articles, and Tv programmes. Qualitative data was coded, analyzed using content analysis through text search query and word-frequency query analysis using NVIVO. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS with levels of significance established using ANOVA with a cut-off point of p being $< \text{or } = 0.05$ at 95% confidence and significance levels. The results show that the study rejected all the null hypotheses and concluded that at 95% confidence level a significant relationship exists between green practices and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi City County. The study concluded that consumer-buying behavior has a positive association with green practices.

Key Words: *environmental sustainability, green practices, green restaurants, green consumerism, eco-friendly products*

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t2511>

1. Introduction

Green practices are methods businesses use to lessen or stop adverse negative environmental effects (Quang-Huy, 2023). Green consumer buying behavior refers to the desire of a customer to buy green brands to suit their environmental needs (Situmorang et al., 2021). With the continuous increase in protection of natural resources concerns among consumers, green environment has emerged as one of critical aspects consumer look out for when making purchasing decisions (Wang, Zaman & Alvi, 2022). According to Alamsyah, Othman and Mohammed (2020), restaurant consumers are shifting towards green restaurants by regularly purchasing eco-friendly products and as way of protecting the environment from pollution. In addition, green restaurants enjoy the following benefits: positively enhanced social and environmental support, attract consumers' attention, reduce operational costs, improve restaurants' corporate image and customer ratings, and foster long-term success of a company's financial performance (Mahasuweerachai, & Suttikun, 2022).

Furthermore, within the tourism industry, the restaurant sector has been regarded as a primary driver of climate change due to the large consumption of energy and production of huge greenhouse gas emissions (Fennell, & Bowyer, 2020; Peng, 2020). The increasing number of environmental laws and pressure from the market have dramatically altered the sector's responsiveness to environmental issues (Han, 2020). This is a clear indicator that engaging in green practices is gaining more and more relevance in consumer choices and restaurants cannot afford to overlook this ever-growing influential green market niche.

Link between green practice and consumer buying behavior

The growing global concern for environmental issues and corresponding changes in consumption restaurant entrepreneurs are increasingly applying green practices into their operations, such as using eco-friendly packaging, reducing water and energy consumption, offering menu items from local ingredients, minimizing food waste, and establishing recycling systems (Riva, Magrizos, Rubel, Rizomyliotis, 2022). This can be attributed to positive green consumer attitudes and increased environmental concerns awareness since restaurants that fail to engage in green practices incurred significant market share losses to greener competition (Dahai., Duan & Choi ,2022).

In addition, consumers increasingly prefer to dine in a restaurant that implements green practices because they believe that by engaging in pro-environmental behavior, they would help in protecting and preserving natural resources and the environment for future generations (Nimri, Dharmesti, Arcodia, & Mahshi, 2021).

Statement of the problem

The contemporary issue of the 21st century is environmental sustainability due to increased environmental problems like global warming, floods, droughts and drastic change of weather patterns which is as a result of continuous pollution of the environment with restaurants being major emitters of greenhouse gases by 30% globally (Teng & Wu, 2019). With the increasing environmental concerns, awareness among consumers has led to consumers to increasingly demand for restaurants to take environmental responsibility by engaging in green practices as a way to avert the negative environmental impacts they faced (González-Viralta, Veas-González, Egaña-Bruna, Vidal-Silva, Delgado-Bello & Pezoa-Fuentes, 2023).

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya.

H_{A1}: There is a significant relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya.

The Conceptual Framework

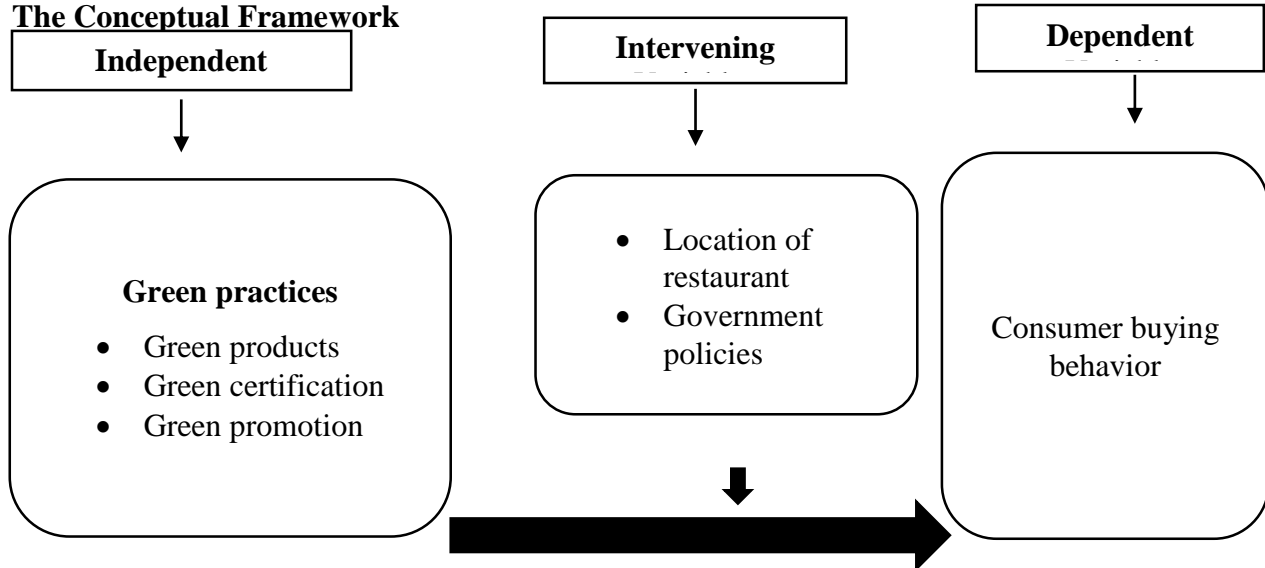


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of Green, Sustainable Practices

Sources: Adapted from (Morel & Kwaye, 2012; Ranjana, 2016)

2. Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviewed the literature on green practices and consumer buying behavior. The study evaluated consumer buying behavior towards green promotion using the ABC Model which explains how green practices in restaurants influence consumer buying behavior (Guagnano, Stern, Dietz, 1995).

Green practices

Green practices refers to “actions that reduce the environmental impact, such as eco-purchase and recycling (González-Viralta, et al 2023). With the continuous increase of consumers recognizing the environmental problems like global warming, consumers are demanding restaurants to adopt eco-friendly practices to reduce carbon emissions (Ismail, David, Abdi & 2023). In addition, green practices benefit companies by providing competitive advantages, enhancing customer loyalty, employee morale, and government relationships, all of which improve financial performance. These practices also reduce long-term operational costs and boost brand reputation. As consumers

grow more environmentally conscious, it becomes increasingly important for companies to communicate and display their use of eco-friendly products, packaging, and practices (Irene, Gil-Saura, María, 2020). Some studies indicate that consumers are inclined to support green restaurants due to their commitment to environmental sustainability. For instance, research by Shishan et al. (2022) found that past dining experiences positively influenced future intentions to dine at green restaurants in the UK. Similarly, Nimri et al. (2021) observed that diners appreciated restaurants implementing green practices, believing their actions contributed to environmental preservation for future generations. Conversely, other studies highlight factors deterring consumers from choosing green restaurants. Sarmiento and El Hanandeh (2018) reported that some consumers were hesitant to dine in green restaurants due to concerns about higher costs. Additionally, Lee (2020) identified skepticism among consumers regarding the authenticity of restaurants' environmental claims, questioning whether these initiatives were genuinely motivated by environmental sustainability or driven by profit motives. While specific studies in the Kenyan context are limited, global trends suggest that consumers are increasingly considering environmental factors in their dining choices.

Consumer buying behavior

Green buying behavior refers to consumption behaviors that reduce environmental pressure such as visiting, recommending green restaurants and paying premiums for services and goods that are friendly to the environment (Li, 2020). Green consumerism refers to conscious and deliberate decision to make dining choices that promote preservation of the environment due to personal moral green beliefs and values (Nimri, Dharmesti, Arcodia, & Mahshi, 2021).

Green consumer buying behavior can be categorized as the willingness of consumer to behave in an environmentally responsible manner, management of the environment, taking part in civic and eco-friendly practices, intentions to revisit, recommend and pay premiums in green restaurants that offer green promotion and services (González-Rodríguez, Díaz-Fernández, & Font, 2019). As the environmental conservation, awareness continues to grow among consumers, their purchasing behaviors and intentions continuous to change in favor of environmentally friendly products by choosing to dine and patronize green restaurants since they believe that in so doing they are saving the environment (Wang, Zaman, & Alvi, 2022).

ABC Theory

This theory aided the study to understand how consumers are influenced by green practices activities by restaurants. The theory states that green customer values, green attitudes toward brands and past experience with a green restaurant can result to either positive or negative purchasing behavior in the future (Liao & Pham, 2020). Attitude-Behavior-Context (ABC) theory assumes that consumers repeatedly patronize green restaurants due to their environmental conservation expectations about particular eco-friendly actions (Wang, Zaman, & Alvi, 2022). This is whereby consumers visit restaurants that engage in green practices believing that in doing so they are protecting the environment from carbon emissions that are contributors to the negative environment impacts such as global warming.

Summary of the Literature Review and the Research Gap

There are limited studies conducted on how green practices influence customer purchasing behavior in restaurants Nairobi City County, Kenya since the existing studies in Kenya have concentrated on Mombasa County and on other subjects. For instance, a study conducted by Wachira (2015), was on the determinants of management commitment to the application of green practices in 4-5-star hotels. This research did not capture the role of green restaurant practices on consumer buying behavior. It didn't take into account how other factors like green certification, green promotion and green product influence consumer buying behavior. Furthermore, the research was restricted to 4-5-star Mombasa county hotels. In addition, this study used descriptive survey design, which is not the best research methodology since it is unreliable, and there is no way to statistically analyze and infer the results. Finally, it focused on the administration's commitment to implement environmentally friendly practices in 4-5-star hotels in Mombasa County. Thus, this research sought to fill in these gaps through the examination of the role of green practices on consumer buying behavior in Nairobi City County with a special focus of how green product, green certification and green promotion affects consumer buying behavior in restaurants in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

3. Methodology

Research design

The researcher used descriptive cross-sectional design to determine whether there is a relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Scope of study

The researcher chose Nairobi County as the area of study because it has the highest number of classified restaurants which are 20 4-5-star restaurants (The-Kenya-Gazette, 2003).

Study approaches

Quantitative and qualitative approach methods were used in this study since they enabled the researcher to get a clear picture from the respondents of whether green practices influenced consumer-buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 1.1 Summary of Sampling Technique

Technique	Where applied	Justification
Census	4-5-star restaurants	To reduce sampling error
Purposive sampling	Restaurant managers, supervisors and waiters	To get critical information from respondents

Sample Size

A total of 79 employees from 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya participated in the study.

Table 1.2 Distribution of the respondents

Target group population	Target population	Sample size	Percentages
Restaurant managers	20	15	20
Restaurant supervisors	40	32	40
Restaurant waiters and waitresses	40	32	40
Total	100	79	100%

Data Collection Instruments

The study used both primary and secondary data collection methods to collect data. The primary data source utilized a structured questionnaire for 4-5-star restaurant employees in Nairobi County, Kenya. A well-structured observation schedule was used to obtain raw data from 4-5- star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya. The research instruments comprised of both open and closed ended questions. Secondary sources of data involved retrieving information from research Tv programmes, articles, newspapers, journals, websites, periodicals and book reviews.

Pre-Testing

Data collection instruments were pre-tested in 1 4-5-star restaurant in Nairobi County, Kenya to eliminate errors, to identify area of improvement and to check on their suitability as research tools. This assisted the researcher to establish the expected response rate and to modify or eliminate questions which are either not clear or were not in line with the objective of the study.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Content validity of the research instruments was determined by pre-testing the instruments and checking responses against study objectives, conceptual frame work and as guided by the research supervisors. A Pre-test was carried out within Nairobi County in non-participating 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya. Research assistants were trained on data collection procedures, including clarifying the purpose of the study to the respondents, making suggestions, observing skills and other important inputs. The instruments were administered to the same respondents in non-participating 4-5- star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya after thirty days as a test of reliability. The pre-testing data was coded and analyzed to identify and correct the emerging errors. A reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained (as shown in table 1.3) which indicated that the research instruments were reliable according to Griethuijsen and Trimmer (2014), who asserted that Alpha co-efficients ranging from 0.67-0.87 for such studies are reliable and reasonable.

Table 1.3 Reliability Test Results: Cronbach's Alpha

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items	Comment
Green practices	0.78	5	Reliable

Data Analysis Technique

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used by the study since the data collected was both numerical and narrative. Quantitative data was analyzed using IBM statistical packages for social sciences with levels of significance established using paired tests with a cut-off point of p being $< \text{ or } = 0.05$ at 95% confidence and significance levels. Qualitative data was analyzed into statements which have high relevance to the objective of the study and was analyzed using NVIVO.

Table 1.4 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Null Hypothesis	Test done	Verdict	Result
H0₁: There is no significant relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County	Regression Analysis	< 0.05 reject the null hypothesis Accept alternative hypothesis > 0.05 fail to reject the null hypothesis Reject the alternative hypothesis	Determine the relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior
HA₁: There is a significant relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County	Regression Analysis	< 0.05 Accept alternative hypothesis Reject the null hypothesis > 0.05 Reject the Alternative hypothesis Accept the null hypothesis	Determine the relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior

4. Results and Discussions

Introduction

This section gives detailed findings of the data collected using questionnaires, observation schedules and secondary data sources. As outlined, the study sought to establish whether there is a relationship between green promotion and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya. The section present findings according to the objectives of the study. The study targeted 79 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Response rate

The response rate measured how well the targeted sample size was arrived at. A high response rate obtained minimized the chances of biased statistics and hence, the study findings are valid and reliable as shown in table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Response Rate

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percent %
Response	56	71%
Non-response	23	29%
Total	79	100%

Out of a total of 79 questionnaires which had been issued to respondents, only 56 were completed which represented a 71% response rate. Response rates approximating 60% for most research should be the researcher's goal (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). This shows that the researcher met the minimum required response rate to make the results reliable and conclusive. A non-response rate of 29% was found due to respondents not being co-operative.

Demographic characteristics of the study

The researcher obtained information about the personal data of respondents. The data was related academic level. The quantitative data were presented in the form of tables and pie charts below:

Academic level of respondents

The results indicated that certificate holders comprise of 25%, 58.9% were diploma holders while 16.1% were Bachelor's degree holder as summarized in figure 1.4 below. This study implies that the green practices are being implemented in the restaurants since the supervisors and waiters and waitresses who are the policy implementers in the restaurant industry fall under the category of diploma holders who comprise of 58.9%. Since educated employees embrace green practices readily because at diploma level the employees have acquired environmental knowledge on the importance of ecological conservation in the curriculum (Sustainability, 2015).

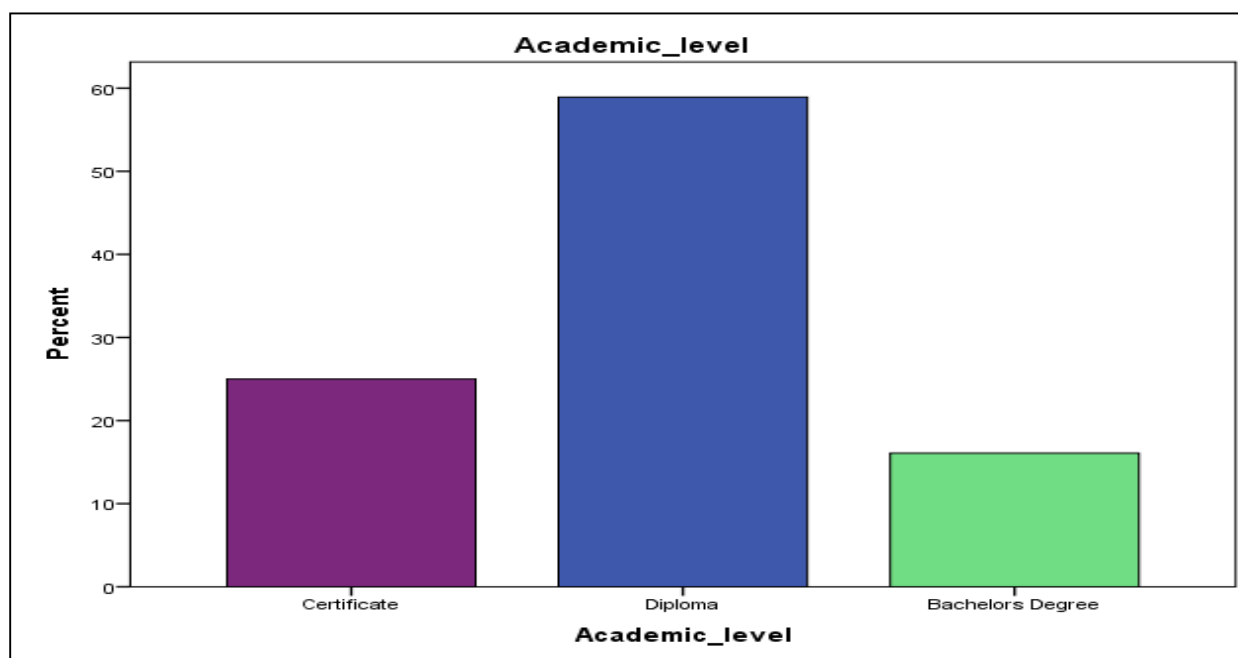


Figure 1.2: Academic level of respondents

Descriptive Statistics of green practices and consumer

Most of the respondents agreed that: green product influences consumer-buying behavior with a (mean =4.1321, standard deviation=0.57370), green certification practices influenced consumer-purchasing behavior (mean= 4.0250, standard deviation=0.51742). The study indicates that the respondents in the study agreed that green promotion affected consumer-purchasing behavior with a mean of 4.0259 and a standard deviation of 0.62762.

Table 1.6: Green practices descriptive analysis

Green Practices	Mean	Std. Deviation
Green Product	4.1321	.57370
Green Certification	4.0250	.51742
Green Promotion	4.0259	.62762

Cross tabulation Analysis on Green Promotion Predictors and Consumer buying behavior

The researcher sought to find out whether green practice predictors have a significant relationship with consumer buying behavior. The results are as shown in Table 1.7:

Table 1.7: Cross-tabulation table for green practice predictors

Variable	χ^2 -value	Df	P-value	Linear by linear Association
Green Product	116.477 ^a	81	.006	.002
Green Certification	127.054 ^a	81	.001	.001
Green promotion	185.337 ^a	99	.000	.001

From the analysis as shown in Table 4.19, at 5% significant level the results show the P value for green product, green certification and green promotion as follows: 0.006, 0.001 and 0.000 respectively. Since the $P < 0.005$ the study concludes that there is indeed a significant association between green product, green certification and green promotion with consumer buying behavior. The results indicate that there is a linear by the linear association between green product, green certification and green promotion with consumer buying behavior since their p-values, which are 0.002, 0.001 and 0.001 since $P < 0.05$. Furthermore, green promotion had the highest significant association with consumer buying behavior since it has the greatest Pearson chi-square static compared to green product and green certification.

Regression Analysis

The study sought to find out the effect of green practices on consumer buying. The results were as shown in table 1.8.

Table 1.8: Regression table for green practice

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.603 ^a	.364	.327	.41154

The findings indicate that green practices accounts for 36.4% increase on consumer buying behavior. Furthermore, there is a strong relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior since the correlation co-efficient is near to 1.

Table 1.9: ANOVA table for green practice predictors

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.030	3	1.677	9.900	.000 ^b
Residual	8.807	52	.169		
Total	13.837	55			

The findings showed a p value of 0.000 which indicates that the overall model for green practice predictors is statistically significant since the $P < 0.05$. This implies that green product, green certification and green promotion are good predictors for consumer buying behavior. Therefore, green product, green certification and green promotion had significant combined effects on consumer buying behavior in 4-5 star restaurants in Nairobi City County ($P\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.005$).

Table 1.10 Coefficients^a 1

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.436	.533		2.691	.010	.365	2.506
Green Product	.238	.121	.285	1.968	.054	-.005	.480
Green Certification	.166	.150	.168	1.109	.273	-.135	.467
Green Promotion	.304	.097	.369	3.139	.003	.110	.499

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer buying behavior

$$Y = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 X_1 + \alpha_2 X_2 + \alpha_3 X_3$$

Consumer buying behavior = $1.436X + 0.238\text{green product} + 0.304\text{green promotion}$

These findings indicate that consumer-buying behavior is affected by green product and green promotion. Green certification does not seem to affect consumer buying behavior since its P value $0.273 > 0.05$. This could be attributed to restaurant businesses being guilty of “green washed” products and services whereby they claim to be self-certified as green and yet their operations are not environmentally friendly for instance packaging a genetically modified sweet potato in a biodegradable takeaway box (Martinez, Angel, & Raquel, 2017).

ANOVA analysis of the relationship between green practice and consumer buying behavior

An ANOVA analysis was used to test the impact of green practices on the consumer buying behavior of 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi City County.

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05% level of importance, and the results are shown in Table 1.11:

Table 1.11: ANOVA Analysis of green practices and Consumer buying behavior

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.915	24	.413	3.266	.001
Within Groups	3.922	31	.127		
Total	13.837	55			

There was a statistical mean difference between mean green practices and mean consumer buying behavior since the P value was $0.001 < 0.05$. This implies that green practices increase consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi City County.

Qualitative Analysis of the influence of green promotion on consumer buying behavior

A further qualitative analysis using NVIVO was undertaken in order to determine the role of green promotion on consumer buying behavior. A word frequency query analysis as shown in Figure 1.4 shows that green practices has an influence on consumer buying behavior since it had more word frequencies because the word green practices was bolder and its word density thicker. These results are in agreement with the results from ANOVA and descriptive analysis of structured observation schedules that indeed green practices has a positive influence on consumer buying behavior.

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t2511>

Word Tree Text Search Query Results for green practices and consumer buying behavior

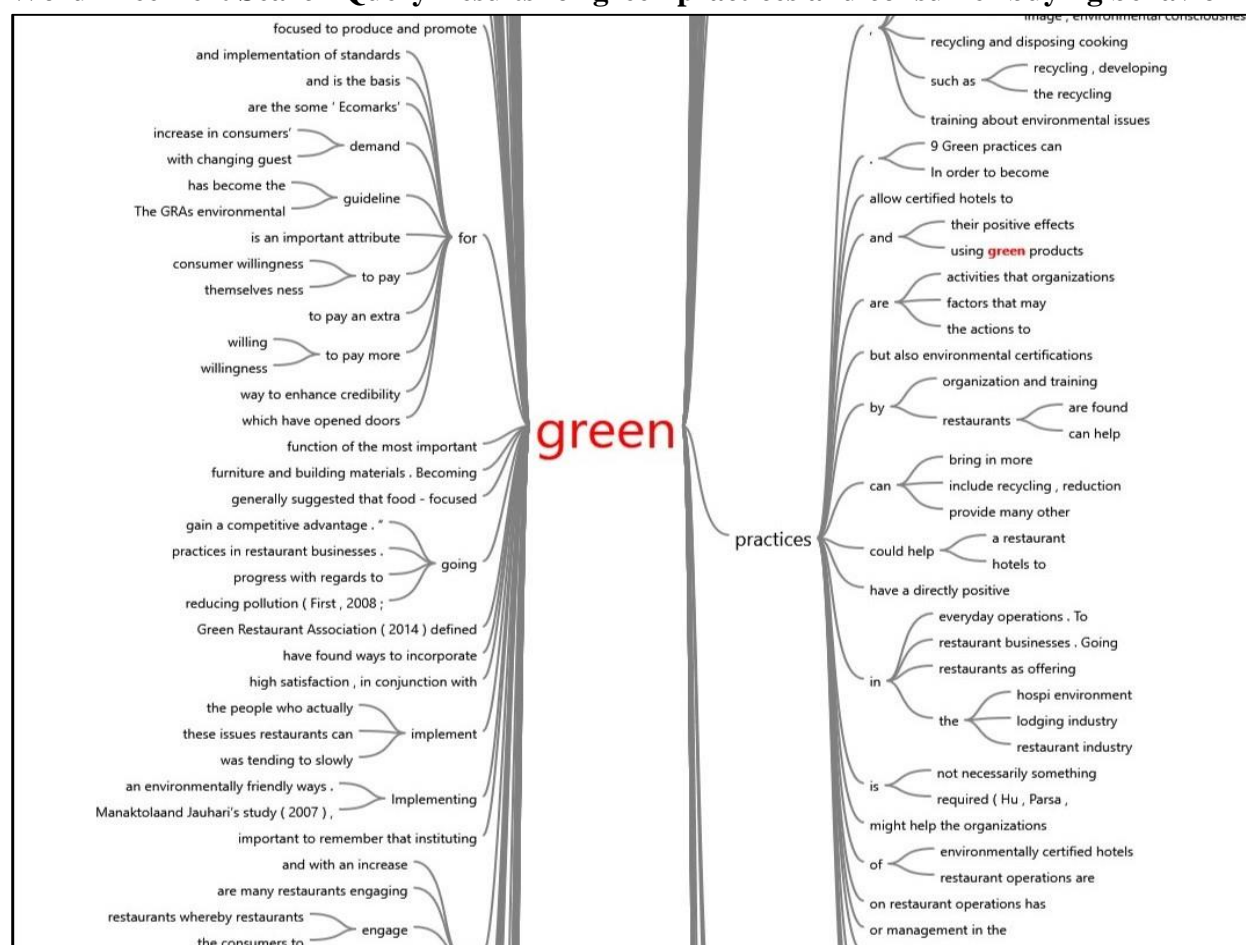


Figure 1.4: Word Tree Text Search Query Results for green promotion and consumer buying behavior

Word Tree analysis (Figure 1.4), shows that green practices in restaurants influence consumer buying behavior since the respondents from the secondary sources of data indicated that restaurants that utilized green practices like offering green products, acquiring environmental certifications, utilizing 3Rs (reduce, recycle, re-use) and composting of waste have a positive effect on the buying behavior of consumers because consumers who are eco-conscious are willing to pay extra and want to dine in eco-restaurants to protect their environment. In addition, restaurants implementing green practices gain a higher competitive edge over their competitors since they meet the everchanging needs, wants and demands of consumers. Furthermore, respondents from secondary data sources noted that consumers who dine in green restaurants achieve high satisfaction.

Table 1.12: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Null Hypothesis	Test done	Verdict	Results
H ₀₁ : Green practices has no significant contribution to the consumer buying behavior of 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya.	H ₀₁ , P-value 0.001<0.05	(H_{A1}) was accepted (H ₀₁) was rejected	There is a significant relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County
H _{A1} : Green practices has a significant contribution to the consumer buying behavior of 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya.	H ₀₁ , P-value 0.001<0.05	(H_{A1}) was accepted (H ₀₁) was rejected	There is a significant relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County

The findings presented a p-value of (0.001) which was less than 0.05 as shown in table 2.0. The alternative hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that, there is a significant relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This means that, consumer-buying behavior are influenced by green practices in restaurants in 4-5-star Nairobi County, Kenya.

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

This section presents the summary of the findings in line with the objectives of the study

Relationship between green promotion and consumer buying behavior

The objective of this study was to determine the relationship between green practices and consumer buying behavior in 4-5- star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya. The findings showed $p=0.001<0.05$ indicating that indeed green practices have a positive significant effect on consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya. This implies that consumer-buying behavior is influenced by green practices in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of study, the following conclusions were made.

1. Green practices contributes significantly on consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County
2. Green product has the greatest influence on consumer buying behavior compared to the green certification and green promotion

Recommendations

Based on findings of study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Restaurant owners should implement green practices in their daily operations since they bear a high impact on the buying behavior of consumers.
2. Restaurant management should put more efforts in green product since they not only offer direct experience opportunity to restaurant consumers but also communicate and visualizing green practices thus increasing market share due to improve brand image.
3. To mitigate green skepticism and encourage patronage, restaurants should emphasize on green promotion through narrative-based communication that details the restaurant's sustainable practices can enhance credibility and consumer trust.
4. Restaurants should demonstrate genuine impact of their sustainability efforts to attract and retain environmentally conscious patrons

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