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**GREEN MARKETING STRATEGY AND SALES PERFORMANCE OF FOOD AND
BEVERAGES FIRMS IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between green marketing strategy and sales performance of food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria. 2 research and 2 hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted seventy (70) registered food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria. The study took a census, and surveyed 3 managers in each of the seventy (70) firms. Structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha. A total of two hundred and ten (210) copies of questionnaire were distributed. Data generated were analyzed using Spearman's rank order correlation. The study found that green distribution and green advertising which were used to proxy green marketing strategy have strong, positive and statistically significant relationship with sales performance of food and beverage firms South-South Nigeria. Therefore, the study conclude that green marketing strategy is a key determinant of sales performance of food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria, and recommends that food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria that seek improved sales performance should use eco-friendly distribution systems and green advertising as part of green marketing strategy designed to earn legitimacy and achieve increased sales performance.

Keywords: Green advertising, green distribution, green marketing strategy, sales performance

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed increased advocacy for environmental conservation and protection, giving rise, and renewing attention to how firms consume natural resources, dispose waste and generally, relate to the environment in their operations. The term "green" or "eco-friendliness" was thus coined to describe environmentally friendly activities in both business and nonbusiness sector. The emphasis on eco-friendly business operations is informed by climate change resulting from the depletion of the ozone layer. This has also result to increased environmental awareness among consumers.

Anyasor (2015) opine that societies are increasingly getting more serious about issues of healthy natural environment, and that businesses are tuning-in by modifying their activities to align with this global concern. Environmental problems such as pollution and degradation, excessive wastes disposal, climate change and global warming have changed consumers' purchasing patterns. Many consumers now demand eco-friendly products that do not only meet their immediate needs but also preserve the environment from damage (Kushwaha & Kumar, 2014).

Chen and Chai (2010) suggests that today's firm will become more sustainable if they identify, anticipate, and satisfy consumers need for eco-friendly products. In the view of Prakash (2002), environmental friendliness is the tactic firms must consider in their efforts to achieve competitive edge. Thus, firms with green marketing philosophy can take advantage of opportunities created by changing consumer tastes and preferences for green products and build a competitive landscape for themselves by dominating new markets and increasing sales performance.

Previous studies by Oluwafemi (2022), Alabo and Anyasor (2021) and Anucha et al. (2018) showed that green marketing strategy enhance sales performance of food and beverages firms. These studies open research opportunities to examine the nexus between different dimensions of green marketing strategy and sales performance of firms. Also, existing studies leave gaps in theoretical foundation, data collection and analysis methods and areas of study. This study therefore, sought to fill these gaps and contribute to knowledge on green marketing and sales performance by examining the variables in the food and beverages sector in South-South, Nigeria. The study is founded on legitimacy theory which holds that firms have a contract with the society as a whole, and that this contract is conveyed via societal expectations of firms. The study is conceptualized in fig. 1.

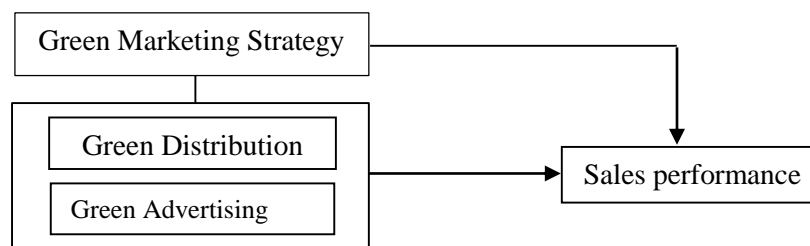


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework of relationship between green marketing strategy and sales performance of food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria.

Source: Oluwafemi (2022), Alabo and Anyasor (2021), Anucha, et al. (2018).

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between green marketing strategy and sales performance of food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria. The specific objectives were to determine the extent to which green distribution and green advertising relates to sales performance of food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria.

Concept of Green Marketing Strategy

Green marketing entails developing and delivering products in line with eco-friendly principles and standards. Yazdanifard and Mercy (2011) states that green marketing focuses on environmental safety and consist eco-friendly production, packaging, distribution and advertising. Green marketing is also involve promotional activities that highlight environmental ethics (Peattie & Charter, 2003).

Green marketing strategy enable firm serve target markets and achieve organizational goals without harming the natural environment (Al-Salaymeh, 2013). Active involvement in environmental protection motivates consumers to purchase green products, thus furthering the sustainable development goals (Gopalakrishnan & Muruganandam, 2013). In the sustainability literature, green marketing encompass practices, policies and procedures that takes natural environmental concerns into account.

Green marketing strategy may be decomposed into several dimensions based on the key decision areas of marketing. Thus, we may have green product, green packaging, green pricing, green distribution, and green promotion. In this study however, we shall focus on green distribution and green advertising.

Green distribution

Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard (2014) emphasized that green distribution focuses on safety precautions and reduces environmental damages during the process of delivering products. For example, reducing the thickness of packaging can reduce the fuel that is consumed by trucks and it can reduce the negative impacts on the roads. B&G focused on “centralized distribution” programme and establishment of policies that bring environmental benefits such as reduced frequency and number of vehicular movements, as well as reducing fuel consumption, thereby, lowering problem of pollution (Peattie & Charter, 2003).

Green distribution is also about effective logistics management that reduces emissions arising from movement of raw materials and finished products, which are suitable for customers, in terms of facilitating their delivery, and to secure cycling procedures within environmental conditions and requirements (Hashem & Al-Rifai, 2011). This entails that firms should also ensure that their distribution decisions take cognizance of the harmful effects of distribution activities on the environment and institute a green distribution strategy to reduce these effects.

Green advertising

Green advertising entails communicating organizational commitment towards sustainability, environmental initiatives of companies and green product attributes (Ghodeswa & Kumar, 2014). It is advertising that aims to convince consumers that they should purchase a particular product because it is good for the environment (Kumar et al., 2017). In addition, Schmuck et al. (2017) pointed out that green advertising addresses the relationship between products and the natural environment, advocate an eco-friendly lifestyle, and highlight a corporate image of environmental responsibility.

According to Kumar and Kumar (2017), green advertising is an important facet of green marketing that communicates greenness in products, practices and processes of organizations. It refers to the appeal that includes environmental sustainability or nature-friendly messages targeting the needs of environmentally conscious consumers (Kumar & Kumar, 2017).

Concept of sales performance

Sales performance is a measure of the outcome of sales activities against stated sales goals, using a specified sales plan in an assumed sales environment (Igwe & Ateke, 2021). Sales performance is also the consistent and satisfactory turnover of goods and services produced and put on the market by a firm. Sales performance is determined by evaluating sales quantity generated by activities of a business. Thus, it is the extent to which a firm makes progress in its selling efforts (Anuradha & Vijai, 2011).

Sales performance is continuous growth of firms' sales volume or value and market share. Green-oriented companies produce and encourage the use of products with environmental benefits, in terms of safeguarding and protecting the environment from depletion, excessive wastes, pollution, climate change and global warming. In the words of Amanda (2002) sales performance refers to the total amount of a firm's output sold to the market especially on monthly or annually basis.

Green marketing strategy could improve sales performance of food and beverages firms since many customers have readjusted their consumption pattern and realigned the satisfaction of their

needs with more environmentally friendly options (Kushwaha & Kumar, 2014). Macharia et al (2017) remarked that a company with green marketing orientation analyzes customers' needs and develop sustainable solution that provide superior customer value.

Sales performance is often affected by salespeople's skills and motivation, customer relationships, and general marketing management decisions. The strength of a firm in its chosen market is often measured by growth in its sales; more dominant firms are apt to command a larger market share, hence, more sales. In today's markets with highly informed consumers, sales performance may be dependent on a number of other factors, including, swift complaint handling, speedy order fulfilment, and ability to deal with special requests (Kaario et al., 2003).

The measurement of sales performance has been an on-going challenge in marketing praxis; and several scholars have proposed different indicators of the construct. Market share, sales growth and profit (Brown & Caylor, 2009), ability to obtain sales volume, ability to interact with customers and ability to engage in relationships with customers (Swenson & Herche, 1994) are some of the indicators of sales performance available in literature. However, this study views sales performance in terms of sales target achievement, selling skills and interaction quality. Sales performance is a multidimensional concept consisting sales growth, market share, sales turnover, profit, etc. (Igwe & Ateke, 202; Reibstein et al., 2006; Hanmaikyur, 2016; CITE, 2012). In this study however, we use it unidimensionally.

Green marketing and sales performance

According to Young et al. (2010) consumers increasingly preferring green products in lieu of their energy-efficiency, resource conservation and environmentally safe properties, from manufacture, use and disposal. Firms have thus realized that a product's hazardous content may affect the consumers' purchasing decisions, and are focusing on producing eco-friendly products to meets the demands of eco-conscious consumers.

This move has led widespread adoption of green marketing and the production green product in virtually every aspect of live, from cars to groceries. This move has helped to balance firms' need for revenues and their responsibility to reduce the environmental impacts of their operations. For instance, Toyota produces Prius which offers several desirable benefits for consumers and the natural environment (Halbright & Dunn, 2010). Prius has an eco-friendly engine that includes emission-reducing gasoline, so it can decrease the emission of carbon dioxide and nitrogen dioxide into the atmosphere; lower emissions will result to a positive impact on the environment (May et al., 2007).

Green advertising allows marketers to use unique and creative ways to promote products. Strong convincing messages from green advertising attract consumers to focus on the issues being explained, as well as influence purchase behaviour (Zinkhan & Carlson, 1995). Sharma (2011) identify three criteria of green advertising: (1) an advertisement begins with educational content about the environment, (2) the advertisement states the firm's change of production procedures to promote a green lifestyle and (3) the advertisement addresses the firm's image of environmental responsibility.

According to Laric and Lynagh (2010), Samsung have an environmental programme named "Planet First" which was introduced to balance the demand for cutting edge technology with the

responsibility of diminishing environmental impacts in order to promote a green way of life. Moreover, Samsung delivered their responsibility of green commitment and green messages to consumers through the Samsung web site and ESPN Magazine, hence it can promote the firm's dedication to sustainability (Laric & Lynagh, 2010). In this situation, consumers form emotions when exposed to green advertising which affects their attitude and perception towards the message and the sponsor (Cox, 2008).

In a study carried out to appraise effects of green marketing on sustainability of breweries in South-East Nigeria, it was found that green product, green price, green distribution, and green promotion all have positive significant relationship with sustainability (Alabo & Anyasor, 2021). Similarly, Surpriadi and Astuti (2017) examined the influence of green products on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry, and found that green products significantly influence customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. This imply that green products increase customer satisfaction.

Also, Yu et al. (2017) examined the impact of green experience on customer satisfaction of green hotels in the United States of America; and found that green experiences significantly influence customer satisfaction. In their own study on customer satisfaction with green hotels in China, Gao and Mattila (2014) discovered that customer satisfaction level is higher when green hotels deliver quality service delivery, but where there is poor service delivery, customer satisfaction level is low. Consequently, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between green distribution and sales performance of food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between green advertising and sales performance of food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria.

Theoretical review

The study was underpinned by legitimacy theory which holds that firms have a social contract (implicit or explicit) with the society, and that this social contract is conveyed via societal expectations (Islam & Craig, 2008). These expectations according to Islam and Craig (2008) are not fixed, but changes over time. This means that companies have a moral obligation to meet the expectations of the society. When a company satisfy society's expectations, it is viewed and treated as legitimate and vice versa; and only a company that is viewed as legitimate has the right to employ the society's human and natural resources (Deegan & Jeffry, 2006).

Legitimacy theory emphasize that organizations must ensure that their activities do not have adverse effect on consumers, the environment and society at large. Consumers in turn, respond positively towards companies and product that honour this social contract. Such response can be in the form of patronage, brand loyalty or positive perception of a company. Hence, legitimacy theory adequately explain the relationship between green marketing strategy and sales performance based on its argument that stakeholders expect food and beverages firms to protect the environment in the course of their business activities. The theory believes that when a company is able to protect the environment from pollution and degradation and take the welfare of the people into account, consumers will be satisfied with the organization and will labeled it as being legitimate.

Methodology

A correlational research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study consists seventy (70) registered food and beverages firms in south-south Nigeria. The study took a census because the size of the population is manageable and because a census is likely to yield a more reliable result. The study surveyed management level staff (production manager, advertising manager, and marketing manager) of each of the firms. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from respondents. Two hundred and ten (210) copies of questionnaire were distributed. The Cronbach's alpha test was used to test the reliability of the instrument in line with the Nunally's benchmark of 0.7 threshold. Table 1 shows the result of the reliability test.

Table 1: Summary of Result of Test of Reliability

Variables	Dimensions/Measures	No. of Items	Alpha Coefficient
Green Marketing Strategy	Green Place,	5	0.776
	Green Advertising	5	0.735
Sales Performance		5	0.711

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on green marketing strategy and sales performance (2025).

The data collected from respondents were analyzed using percentage and frequency tables, mean, standard deviation, Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho).

Data Presentation, Analyses and Results

A total of two hundred and ten (210) copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents from seventy (70) registered food and beverage firms in south-south Nigeria, on a frame of 3 respondents each. Table 2 provides a breakdown of questionnaire administration.

Table 2: Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

No. of Questionnaire Issued	No. of Questionnaire Retrieved	%
210	195	93

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on green marketing strategy and sales performance (2025).

Table 1 shows that out of two hundred and ten (210) copies of questionnaire administered to respondents, one hundred and ninety-five (195) copies were retrieved which represents 93% retrieval rate.

Table 3: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	92	47%
Female	103	53%
Total	195	100%

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on green marketing strategy and sales performance (2025).

Table 2 shows the gender of respondents. The data indicates that out of the 195 respondents who completed and returned copies of the questionnaire, 103 (53%) were females and 92 (47%) were males.

Table 4: Correlation between Green Distribution and Sales Performance

Correlations			Green Distribution	Sales Performance
Spearman's rho	Green Distribution	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.905**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
		N	195	195
	Sales Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.905**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
		N	195	195

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on green marketing strategy and sales performance (2025).

Table 4 demonstrates that green distribution relate with sales performance of food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria. The rho coefficient of 0.905 produced by the test indicates a very strong association between the variables. The test of significance indicates that with $P.002 < 0.01$ we can reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between green distribution and sales performance of food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria.

Table 5: Correlation between Green Advertising and Sales Performance

Correlations			Green Advertising	Sales Performance
Spearman's rho	Green Advertising	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.778*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.023
		N	195	195
	Sales Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.778*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.
		N	195	195

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

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on green marketing strategy and sales performance (2025).

Table 5 presents the result of correlation analysis between green advertising and sales performance of food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria. The result indicates a strong correlation between green advertising and sales performance ($\rho = .778^*$) and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level as indicated by the symbol. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the relationship between green marketing strategy (green distribution and green advertising) and sales performance of food and beverages firm in South-south Nigeria. The statistical tests conducted showed that there is a strong and significant relationship between green distribution and sales performance of food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria. This finding supports the finding of Sivesan et al. (2013) that green marketing practices (green product, green pricing, green promotion and green place) have significant correlation with customer satisfaction of leather companies in Sri Lanka.

The analysis also revealed a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between green advertising and sales performance of food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria. This finding also aligns with that of Sivesan et al. (2013) green promotion have significant correlation with customer satisfaction of leather companies in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the statistical tests have shown that green marketing strategy is a significant determinant of sales performance of food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria. The results confirmed that green distribution and green advertising are significant predictors of sales performance of food and beverage firms South-South Nigeria. Thus, we conclude that green marketing strategy significantly relate to sales performance of food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria; and recommends that

- 1) Food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria that are struggling with sales performance should practice green marketing, as this would improve their sales performance by increasing customer patronage.
- 2) Food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria should use eco-friendly distribution systems so as to preserve the environment and increase their sales performance.
- 3) Food and beverages firms in South-South Nigeria that are currently experiencing low sales performance should engage in green advertising to attract and keep eco-conscious consumers and improve their sales performance.

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