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INFLUENCE OF GREEN CERTIFICATION ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR IN 4-5 STAR RESTAURANTS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT
The main aim of this study was to examine the role of green certification on consumer buying behavior in 4-5 star restaurants in Nairobi County. With the increasing environmental conservation concerns, consumers are increasingly drifting towards restaurants that are environmentally certified by credible certification bodies due to increased concerns raised by environmentalists over restaurants offering "green washed" products and services by claiming to be self-certified as green and yet their operations are not eco-friendly (Maritinez, Angel & Raquel, 2017). Furthermore, there are limited studies in this area. The study adopted a descriptive survey design where a sample size of 19 restaurants were sampled in Nairobi County. Qualitative data was coded, analyzed using NVIVO for easier analysis. Quantitative data was coded and analyzed using SPSS with levels of significance established using paired tests with $P <$ or $= 0.05$ at 95% confidence and significance levels. The findings showed an $R^2 = 21.4\%$, $df=1$ and $p=0.001 < 0.05$ indicating that indeed green certification has a positive significant effect on consume buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi. This implies that consumer buying behavior is influenced by green certification in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi. The study recommended that the Kenyan government should come up with a credible Green Certification programme to certify Kenyan restaurants as compliant with green practices.
Keywords: Green practices, eco-friendly products, environmental conservation, green consumers, eco-restaurants

INTRODUCTION

Green certification is a verification or endorsement by independent agencies which are to mandated to test and ascertain that environmental practices have been adhered to in the production of a given good or service in the restaurant industry (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016). Green consumer buying behavior refers to the experiences and activities by restaurant guests who engage in purchasing, consuming and disposing products and services in a manner that conserves the environment (Kaufmann, Panni, & Orphanidou, 2012). The tremendous increase in environmental conservation concerns awareness (Verma & Chandra, 2018) and claims by environmentalists of restaurants being guilty of offering "green washed" products and services to consumers like for instance packaging a genetically modified sweat potato in a biodegradable takeaway box , have immensely influenced their restaurant patronage whereby nowadays consumers tend to gradually drift towards restaurants that are credibly certified to be eco-friendly to the environment (Martinez, Angel, & Raquel, 2017). For instance, globally the green consumer market generates $ 290 billion annually with 14% of them representing the eco-tourism market as a result of increased global environmental concerns awareness (Schneider, 2012; Martinez, Angel, & Raquel, 2017). This clearly indicates that the restaurant industry cannot afford to overlook this ever-growing influential green market niche since the green demographics are increasingly becoming important in terms of revenue generation. Green restaurant certification is a custom tailored product based on international standards: ISO 14001, Green Globe, Green Restaurant Association (GRA) and National Restaurant Association (N.R.A) and follows the concept of 3Rs (Re-use, Reduce and Recycle) (Schneider, 2012; G.R.A, 2015). According to Schneider (2012), restaurants which have been certified to be environmentally friendly by credible institutions are identified as market leaders in practices that ecofriendly, energy conservation and a future that is suitable often have a competitive advantage.

Link between green certification and consumer buying behavior

Consumers are continuously pressurizing restaurants to take environmental responsibility due to their contribution to the deteriorating environmental state they are in today since restaurants are major emitters of greenhouse gases by 30%. By adopting green certification, restaurants will be demonstrating to their consumers that they have taken environmental responsibility by making a green commitment in order to voluntarily adopt ecological initiatives (Castro, Amores-Salvado, & Navas-Lopez, 2016). In the restaurant sector, implementing environmental restaurant certification programmes is considered an essential prerequisite to attract and retain an increasing market segment of pro-environmental customers who have a preference for, and are willing to purchase, sustainable and green accommodation products (Martinez, Angel, & Raquel, 2017). Thus, restaurant managers need to take their

environmental responsibility and find effective ways to respond to these demands since perceived deficiencies in environmental management can be damaging to corporate image and profitability (Martinez et al., 2017).

Statement of the problem
The contemporary issue of the 21st century is environmental sustainability due to increased negative environmental impacts like global warming, floods, droughts and drastic change of weather patterns which is as a result of continuous environmental pollution. Globally, restaurants are among the major emitters of greenhouse gases by 30% (Teng & Wu, 2019). In addition, there are increasing concerns raised by environmentalists that restaurants are offering "green washed" products and services. These tremendous increase in consumer environmental concerns awareness and "green washed" products and services has resulted in the increase in consumers demanding for restaurants to take environmental responsibility by undergoing green certification by credible green certifying agencies as a way to avert these negative environmental impacts (Martinez, Angel, & Raquel, 2017). Furthermore, there are limited studies in this area, thus prompting the researcher to undertake this study.

Research Hypotheses
$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between green certification and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya.
HA_1: There is a significant relationship between green certification and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya.

The Conceptual Framework
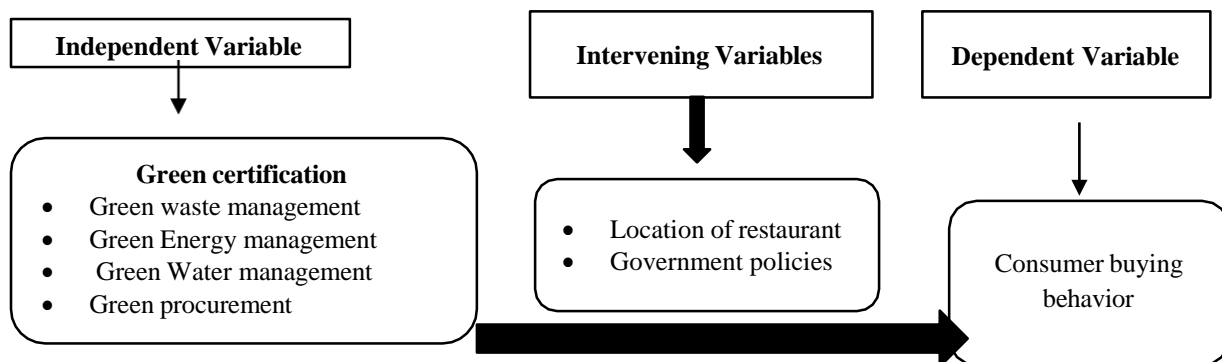
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Figure 1.18: Conceptual framework of Green, Sustainable Practices
Sources: Adapted from (Morel & Kwaye, 2012; Wong & Rashad, 2015; Ranjana, 2016)

LITERATURE REVIEW
Introduction
This chapter reviewed the literature on green certification and consumer buying behavior. The study evaluated consumer buying behavior towards green certification using slack resources theory which states that restaurants which have sufficient assets and resources often tends to allocate their resources that are discretionary for practices that are socially responsible, such as enhancements in the environment that are ascertained by reputable third parties like G.R.A to be in line with international standards of environmental conservation practices in order to obtain better image, reputation and become socially responsible, which leads to more successful outcomes in the future.

Green Certification and Consumer buying behavior
The emerging trend towards environmentally conscious travel and tourism has led to growth in the number of environmentally friendly restaurant certification programs in the food and beverage sector. Green consumer buying behavior refers to 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 certified green products and services (González-Rodríguez, Díaz-Fernández, & Font, 2019; Handriana & Ambara, 2016). As the environmental conservation awareness continues to grow among consumers, customers are changing their attitudes and increasingly demand for industries to offer products and services that are friendly to the environment and ethically correct. The hospitality industry, especially the restaurant

industry in particular is no exception. Actually, the restaurant industry increasingly faces pressure to operate in a eco-friendlier manner given that it is among the major contributor in emission of greenhouse gases globally by 30% (Martinez, Angel, & Raquel, 2017; Teng & Wu, 2019). Green certifications act as a means to promote the voluntary implementation of sustainable practices in restaurants while distinguishing real eco-friendly companies from "green-washed" products and services (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016). The benefits of certifying restaurants to be environmentally friendly include: attracting eco-friendly customers to certified restaurants, eliminating environmentally harmful practices, increasing cost savings providing restaurant guests with accurate information about environmental performance and developing a better knowledge of job and production systems (Geerts, 2014).

Slack Resources Theory
This theory mainly focuses on how green certification can affect the buying behavior of consumers and thus aided the study to understand how consumers are influenced by green certification programmes. The theory proposes that any firm that bears sufficient assets often tends to allocate their resources that are discretionary for practices that are socially responsible, such as enhancements in the environment that are ascertained by reputable third parties like G.R.A to be in line with international standards of environmental conservation practices in order to obtain better image, reputation and become socially responsible, which leads to more successful outcomes in the future (Miles & Russell, 1997; Ranjana, 2016).

Summary of the Literature Review and the Research Gap
Past studies have examined green certification on different subjects and disciplines and ignored to conduct studies on how green restaurant certification affects consumer behavior. Like for instance, Martinez, Angel, & Raquel (2017), conducted a study on customer responses to environmentally certified hotels in Spain. This study mainly concentrated on how customers respond to eco-certified hotels without specifically focusing on how green restaurant certification influences consumer buying behavior in restaurants in Kenya. Furthermore, this study mainly focused on aspects like green practices, green image, environmental consciousness and how they affect consumers 'behavioral intentions in green certified hotels without specifically focusing green certification practices like green energy management, green water management, green waste management and green procurement and how they affect consumer buying behavior thus, prompting the researcher to undertake these research in order to fill in this gap by examining whether green products have an effect on consumer buying behavior in Nairobi County and whether green products have a higher quality as compared to non-green products.

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

Sampling Technique
Table 1.1 summarizes the sampling techniques the researcher used when undertaking the study.

Table 1.1 Summary of Sampling Technique

Technique	Where applied	Justification
Census	4-5-star restaurants	To reduce sampling error
Purposive sampling	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 restaurant 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 restaurant in Nairobi, 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 0.69 was obtained (Table 1.3) which indicated that the research instruments were reliable according to Griethuijsen and Trimmer (2014), who asserted that Alpha co-efficient 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 Certification	0.69	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 < or =0.05 at 95% confidence and significance levels as summarized in Table 1.4. 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 certification 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 null hypothesis Reject the alternative hypothesis	Determine the relationship between green certification and consumer buying behavior
HA₁: There is a significant relationship between green certification 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 certification and consumer buying behavior

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 certification 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 to gender, age, and academic level. The quantitative data were presented in the form of tables and pie charts below:

Gender of respondents
The demographic characteristics results indicated that 51.8% were female while the male counterparts were 48.21% as shown in Figure 1.2. This study indicates that majority of the respondents were female.
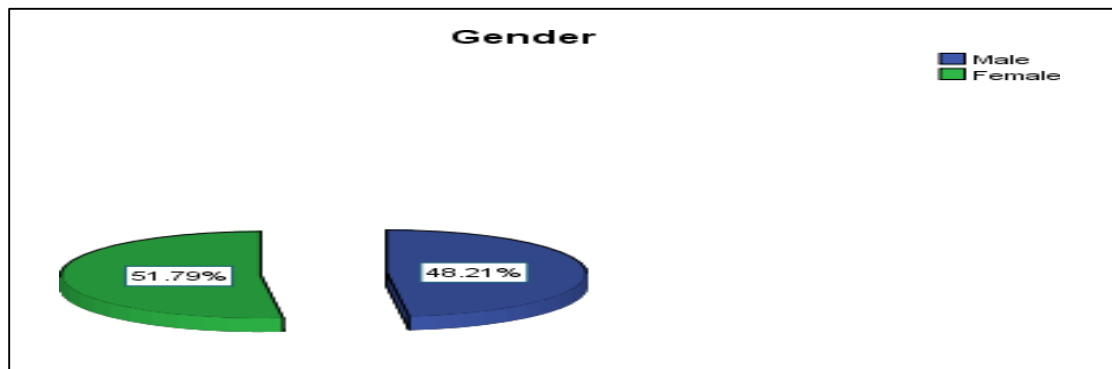
Figure 1.2: Gender of respondents

Descriptive Statistics of green certification and consumer
The study indicates that respondents use 3-container recycling bins system for waste products with a mean of 3.32 and a standard deviation of 1.403. With a mean of 4.54 and a standard deviation of 0.503, the study indicates that the respondents are using energy-efficient lighting bulbs. Respondents are serving beverages in re-usable glasses or mugs upon request with a mean of 3.82 and a standard deviation of 1.403. 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County purchase eco-friendly products with a mean of 4029 and a standard deviation of 0.624. Respondents use motion detectors for lights in restrooms with a mean of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 0.781. The results indicate that indeed green certification practices in terms of green procurement and green management of waste, water and energy influenced consumer buying behavior since the mean is more than 3.0.

Table 1.6: Green product descriptive analysis

Green certification	Mean	Std. Deviation
Offer recycling bins for waste products like plastic cups, paper sleeves and cup sleeves.	3.32	1.403
Use of energy-efficient lighting	4.54	.503
Serve beverages in reusable glasses upon guest request	3.82	1.403
Purchasing eco-friendly products	4.29	.624
Use of motion detectors for lights in restrooms	4.16	.781

Regression analysis of the relationship between green certification predictors and consumer buying behavior
The researcher sought to find out the direction of the association between green product and consumer buying behavior. The results are as shown in 1.7:

Table 1.7 Model Summary for green product predictors78

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate
1.Green waste	.319[a]	.010	.085	.47968
2. Green energy	.273[a]	.324	.058	.48691
3.Green water	.231[a]	.038	.036	.49254
4.Green Procurement	.040[a]	.210	.017	.50580

a. Predictors: (Constant), Green Product Design, Green Packaging, Green Ambience

The summary model provides for the correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination (r2) for the regression model. The coefficients of determination of green waste, green energy, green water and green procurement are: 0.10, 0.324, 0.038 and 0.210 hence suggesting that for every unit increase in green waste will result 10% increase in consumer buying behavior. A unit increase in green energy will result in 32.4% increase in consumer buying behavior. A unit increase in green water will result in 3.8% increase in consumer buying behavior, and finally a unit increase in green procurement will result in 21% increase in consumer buying behavior. These findings imply that green energy management had the most significant impact on consumer buying behavior of 32.4% in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Regression Analysis of Green certification and Consumer Buying Behavior
The study used multiple regression analysis to test whether there is any significant contribution of green certification on consumer buying behavior and the results are as indicated in table 1.8:

Table 1.8: Regression Results

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R^2 Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
				Change Statistics				
.463[a]	.214	.200	.44875	.214	14.713	1	54	.000

Results indicate that green certification has a weak positive significant influence on consumer buying behavior since the co-relation coefficient is 0.463. Table 1.8 indicates a co-efficient of determination of 21.4% which implies that green certification accounts for 21.4% increase in consumer buying behavior. There is a weak positive relationship between green certification and consumer buying behavior since the correlation co-efficient is far from 1.

Table 1.9: ANOVA[a]

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	2.963	1	2.963	14.713	.000[b]
1	Residual	10.874	54	.201		
	Total	13.837	55			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer buying behavior

The results in Table 1.9 indicates a p value of 0.001 which implies that green certification has a significant influence on consumer buying behavior since P<0.05.

Table 1.10: Green Certification Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.449	.488		5.018	.000	1.471	3.428
Green Certification	.458	.119	.463	3.836	.000	.218	.697

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer buying behavior

$Y = mx + ß_0 + ß_1$

Consumer buying behavior= 2.449X+ 0.458 green certification

This implies that green certification has a positive significant influence on consumer buying behavior. This study indicates that there is indeed a weak positive relationship between green certification and consumer buying behavior since P<0.05. This study implies that guests prefer dining in credible green certified restaurants.

**Qualitative Analysis of the influence of green certification on consumer buying behavior**

A further qualitative analysis using NVIVO was conducted to determine the influence of green certification on consumer buying behavior. A qualitative analysis as shown in Table 1.11 supports the findings from multiple regression analysis since it has a coding reference frequency of 19. These results are in agreement with the multiple regression results that indeed green certification has a positive influence on consumer buying behavior.

Table 1.11 Node matrix analysis of green products and consumer buying behavior

Objective	Coding reference count
Green Certification	19

A further Text search Query analysis was conducted and the results are as shown in Word tree Figure 4.4.

Word tree Text Search Query on green products on consumer buying behavior
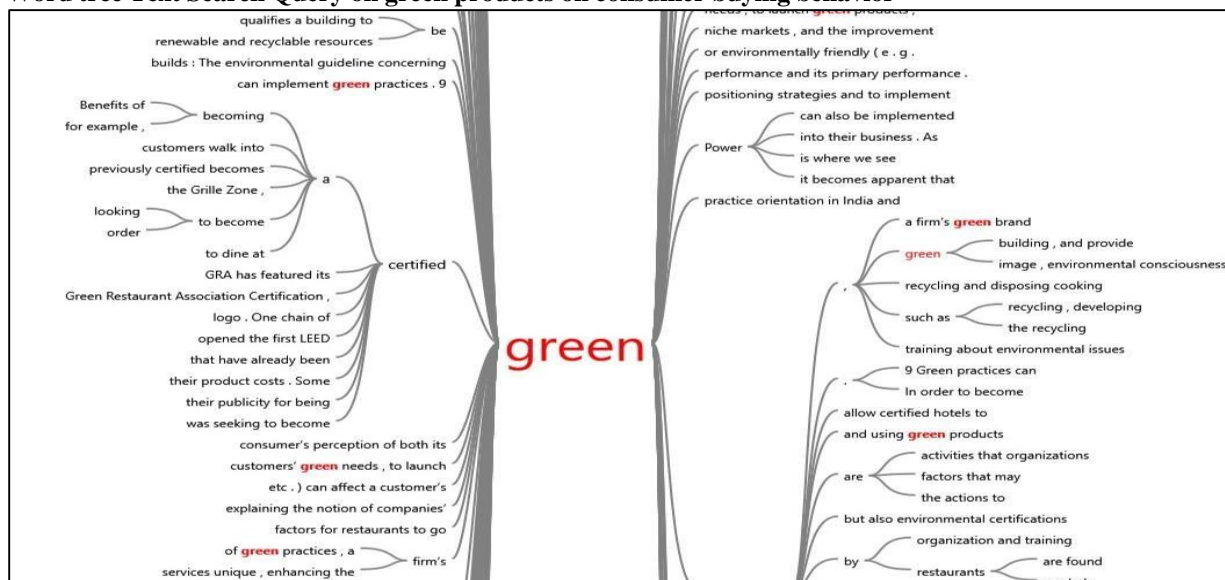
Figure 1.5: Word tree Text Search Query on green certification on consumer buying behavior

Word Tree analysis (Figure 1.5), shows that green certified restaurants influence consumer buying behavior since the respondents from the secondary sources of data indicated that consumers who are environmentally conscious walk into previously green certified restaurants repeatedly because they respond to their green needs by utilizing green power, acquiring reputable green certificates like GRA, using renewable and recycled resources in order to save the environment.

Table 1.12: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Null Hypothesis	Test done	Verdict	Results
$H0_1$: Green certification has no significant contribution to the consumer buying behavior of 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya.	$H0_1$, P-value $0.001 < 0.05$	**(HA_1) was accepted** ($H0_1$) was rejected	There is a significant relationship between green certification and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County
HA_1: Green certification has a significant contribution to the consumer buying behavior of 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi	$H0_1$, P-value $0.001 < 0.05$	**(HA_1) was accepted** ($H0_1$) was rejected	There is a significant relationship between green certification 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 1.12. The alternative hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that, there is a significant relationship between green certification and consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This means that, consumer buying behavior are influenced by credible green certified restaurants in 4-5-star Nairobi County, Kenya.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Relationship between green products and consumer buying behavior
The objective of this study was to determine the relationship between green certification and consumer buying behavior in 4-5- star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya. The findings showed an R2= 21.4%, df=1 and p=0.001<0.05 indicating that indeed green certification has a positive significant effect on consume buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County, Kenya. This implies that consumer buying behavior is influenced by green certification in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi County.

CONCLUSION
Based on the findings of study, the following conclusions were made.
1. Green certification contributes significantly on consumer buying behavior in 4-5-star restaurants in Nairobi
2. Green energy management has the most significant influence on consumer buying behavior since it is closer to 1 as compared to green waste, green water and green procurement.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on findings of study, the following recommendations were made:
1. Restaurant shareholders should embrace green certification by reputable third parties like ISO140001 and Green Restaurant Association in order to distinguish themselves as real eco-friendly company since its accredited to be eco-friendly and are in line with international standards of environmental conservation in order to obtain a green image and a good reputation that they are responsible in conserving the environment
2. Restaurant management should put more efforts on green procurement and green energy management since they have the highest significant influence on consumer buying behavior as compared to other green certification determinants.
3. The Kenyan government should come up with Green Restaurant Certification programmes, which are aligned with international standards of environmental conservation guidelines which address Kenyan environmental needs by emphasizing more on green energy management, green water management, green waste management, green procurement and green building to be awarded to restaurants that meet the required green environmental practices in their operations in order to conserve our wetlands and reduce waste disposal challenges.

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