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Green Positioning Strategy and Marketing Success of Oil & Gas Companies in Rivers State

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Abstract: *The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between green positioning strategy and marketing success of oil & gas companies in Rivers State. The study applied a cross sectional survey design used in structured questionnaire to collect data from 400 consumers of various host communities of oil & gas companies. In analyzing the relationship between our variables of interest and to test the hypotheses raised in the study, Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used with the help of SPSS version 21.0. Findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of green positioning strategy and measures of marketing success. The study therefore concludes that green positioning strategy is a useful marketing tool for companies to improve marketing success. Based on the above findings and conclusion, the study recommends that oil & gas companies who want to improve marketing success are encouraged to incorporate green value propositions in to their products and services, as this research has proven the possibility of improving consumer commitment and advocacy through green knowledge and emotional attributes.*

Keywords*: Green Positioning, Marketing Success, Environmental Consciousness*

1. INTRODUCTION

Crude oil reserve remains a very important resource for Nigeria, as it is the main economic driver and has contributed immensely to the economic development of the country. The petroleum industry who activities are centered on crude oil exploration and marketing, alone accounts for over 90% of the country's revenue (Yahaya & Bakare, 2018). Despite this huge revenue accrued to the nation's revenue stream, activities in the industry have contributed to an overwhelming and significant proportion of environmental degradation and threatened the various eco-system including human and aquatic lives. This is more evident in the Niger Delta region of the country; notably the Ogoni axis of Rivers State who's environment has been severely damaged by activities of multinational oil & gas companies operating in the region. It was against this backdrop that the United Nations Environmental Programme in 2011 conducted an environmental assessment to ascertain the impact of oil spillages on the living conditions of host communities and thereafter came up with a report and/or blueprint to tackle the

menace. Many believe that up till today no meaningful achievement has been recorded in implementing the recommendations in the report by both the Federal Government and oil & gas companies (Adati, 2019).

Consequently, a number of groups particularly non-government organizations such as civil societies and other pressure groups have advocated for programmes and policies that promotes the individuals' well-being in the society and safety of the environment. Many of these groups show great support for company activities such as renewable energy, recycling of used products (packages), healthy products, etc (Chen, 2013). As a result of these voices (movements) and other considerations, it could be arguably stated that oil & gas companies are re-thinking their business model by repositioning their brand essence in an environmental sustainability direction that is underpinned from a green marketing perspective.

According to Sima (2013), designing and implementing green positioning policy is strategic, as it entails a critical assessment of key organizational processes and resources. The author further opined that the starting point in deploying green positioning strategy by petroleum companies is to clearly captured the green marketing initiative in the mission and/vision statement with a view to creating green awareness in it Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). Any green positioning initiative that does not represent a honest communication may only last in the short-run. As observed by Schweitzer (2010), many petroleum companies with green positioning policies last only in the short-run because what is promised in their IMC is not what is delivered, and in some cases, the greenness of the brand does not reflect across multiple product lines. Companies who are sincere in both communicating and delivering green products and services, affords buyers the opportunity to compare and examine the stock of greenness across product lines, thereby incorporating green considerations in their decision making process (Prakash, 2002). Green consumers are therefore increasingly conscious of environmental safety and this is an important component in shaping their preference and commitment.

The notion of adopting of green ideology in positioning brands in the market has long been explored by many scholars. In this sense, the concept of green positioning has witness divergent views and scholars are yet to come in to terms of a unified definition. Schweitzer (2010) observed that in the bid to position petroleum brands, companies are beginning to re-examine their operations in line with green initiatives by ensuring that the production and marketing of products are carried out with a huge sense of concern for the environment and health of the people. He further observed that companies can build corporate reputation by adhering to environmentally friendly protocols in their day-to-day operations. Also, Suillivan (2009) stated that environmentally conscious consumers have severally made effort to collaborate with environmental activists in order to educate people on the need to support organizations who initiate programmes that promote the quality of our eco system. In line with this point, oil & gas companies can design product attributes that appeal to the conscience and emotions of buyers purchase actions and post purchase behaviour.

A number of studies have been carried out in the area of green positioning as it affects business outcomes. Uthamaputhran and Amin (2016) examined green product positioning and purchase intention in Malaysia. The authors adopted functional attributes and emotional benefit as dimensions of green product positioning. Also, Memar and Ahmed (2012) investigated the influence of specific determinants on consumers' green purchase intentions. While it was an empirical study to evaluate consumer buying intention towards eco-friendly printers in the Swiddish market, however, determinants that were considered in the study are; attitude towards green behaviour, green subjective norms, demographics, environmental laws and guidelines, green knowledge and eco-literacy, willingness to pay for green products, and green brand strength. More so, Mohammad and Abdulrahim (2016) investigated the impact of green brand equity and consumer intention to use green products. The study

examined brand trust, brand image, brand awareness, and perceived value; from a green perspective with respect to Jordanian consumers.

In view of the above studies and the need to advance extant studies, this research adopted green brand knowledge and green emotional attributes as dimensions of green positioning strategies in order to examine their effects on customer commitment and advocacy. The research further introduced environmental consciousness as a moderating variable amidst the relationship between green positioning strategy and marketing success as it relates to the oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The issue of environmental degradation and its effect on human eco-system in Nigeria has attracted a lot of scholars and practitioners in this area of discourse. This may be due to the fear of total collapse of socio-economic activities which is mainly considered as the bedrock of any meaningful progress in a nation. While some organizations see these issues as disturbing, others view them as opportunities to build competitive advantage. This is due to increasing awareness of environmentally conscious consumers who most times go out of their way in search of eco-friendly products and services (Chen, 2013). In line with this thinking, it may not be far from the truth to state that companies who key into the green initiative by supplying eco-friendly products and services could outpace competitors in the industry.

It is however, against this backdrop this research was set out to investigate whether green positioning strategies could lead to improved marketing success in the oil & gas industry. Specifically, this research is poised to examine if consumers would buy more from a particular oil & gas company who is more concerned in producing and delivering environmentally friendly products and services. Thus, this effort begs for answers on how committed buyers may be in promoting green products and the effect it may have on companies who have similar orientation. This is the thrust of this research.

1.3 Model Specification and Conceptual Framework

The research is on green positioning strategy and marketing success. The independent variable which is green positioning strategy has green brand knowledge and green emotional attribute as dimensions. On the other hand, the dependent variable which is marketing success was measured with consumer commitment and advocacy. Below is the model specification:

MS = *f* (GPS) (EF)----------Model 1

MS = (CC, A)----------Model 2

GPS = (GBK, GEA)---------- Model 3

EF = EC----------Model 4

(CC,A)=*f*(GBK,GEA)(EF) ---------- Model 5

Therefore,

MS = Marketing Success

GPS = Green Positioning Strategy

EF = Environmental Factor

GBK = Green Brand Knowledge

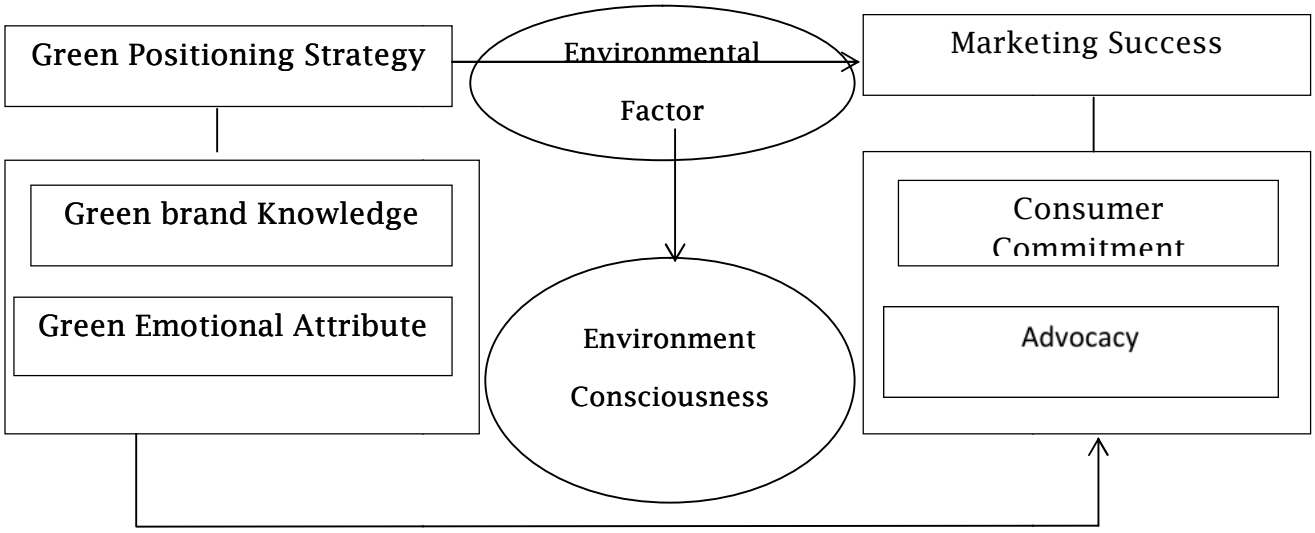
GEA = Green Emotional Attribute

CC = Consumer Commitment

A = Environmental Consciousness

EC

Below is the conceptual framework for this study



Source: Research Desk, 2020; as adopted from Memar & Ahmed (2012).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

The theory upon which this research was anchored is the 'green theory'. The origin of this theory and its popular recognition dates back in 1960s. It was not until this period in which there was public recognition of the global environmental crisis arising from the 'tragedy of the commons', which is the idea that as self- interested individuals, humans will overuse shared resources such as land, air, fresh water and fish. This period coincided with a demand for a green theory to help explain and understand these socio-political issues (Hugh, 2018).

Fundamentally, green theory addresses the interest of nature itself rather than only the interests of humanity in nature. The theory recognizes that environmental issues evoke questions about relations between and among us, the eco system, and others in the context of community and collective decision-making. For green theorists, the answers are found in alternative ideas about political association based on ecological relationships. More so, one of the foremost believe of the green theorists is that global environmental problems require global solutions. This requires those relevant stakeholders, including world leaders; to come together in order to develop an understanding

and perhaps look towards championing green social movements rather than individualizing the struggle (Renwick, Redman & Maguire, 2008)

According to Mohammad and Abdelrahim (2016), green theory helps us to understand this, in terms of long-term ecological values rather than short-term human interests. These interests are generally pursued by states through investments in technology, but there is no easy technical solution to human-induced climate change. From the perspective of green theory, this technical impasse requires a change in human values and behaviour and therefore presents an opportunity for political innovation or even a transformative shift in global politics. It is therefore important to mention that because consumers are increasingly advocating for healthy products, alert companies have realized the opportunity to utilize this orientation and build competitive advantages. The green theory is thus, suitable for this research.

2.2 Conceptualizing Green Positioning Strategy

The successful positioning of brands in the mind of target markets has been a debatable issue among interested scholars and its definition is far reaching in terms consensus. Hartmann and Ibanez (2006) defined green brand positioning as the attributes of green brand products that are environmentally friendly and have significant value to consumers. Wang (2016) found that many researchers emphasize about the green brand positioning for the brand to meet green consumers' expectation on valuable attributes. The author was of the view that positioning a brand as eco friendly directs certain expectations and beliefs in the minds of target audience for perceived value found in the product attributes. More so, Suki (2016) observed that green buyers who have a purchase experience for ecological products with huge environmental knowledge, would have a higher tendency to repeat purchase due to brand positioning.

In addition, Hartmann and Ibanez (2006) expressed green brand positioning as value or quality that comes with green products. Green brand positioning entails how a firm adopts green image to represent products and services that would be perceived by the market. The green image that is perceived by the market or consumers therein, as the green image is the green brand positioning (Saha & Darnton, 2005). Elaborating the concept of green brand positioning from a more psychology point of view, Wang (2016) highlighted that green positioning consists of mental picture or description for consumers to tell more about the firm, and get attracted by the firm's green attributes which are reflected in its offerings. Therefore, it is crucial for green firms to attain green sustainability by making its product attributes more significant.

2.3 Marketing Success

Marketing success describes the health of a firm as an outcome of marketing programmes and activities measured against stated marketing objectives or compared to the health of competing firms (Ateke & Kalu, 2016). It is a measure of the extent to which the firm achieves its marketing objectives in relation to its marketing programmes and activities (Ateke & Iruka, 2015). It assesses the contributions of the firm's marketing efforts to its corporate objectives (Buzzel, Gale, & Sultan, 2005). Marketers have developed and used various marketing success measures to assess the impact of marketing. Although financial measures account for a greater percentage of success measures used in marketing practice (Pont & Shaw, 2003), these seem to be inadequate for measuring important elements of marketing success.

Studies have revealed that a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures have become essential in assessing marketing success (Terblanche et al, 2013); and that qualitative measures are better predictors of companies' long-term goals than quantitative measures (Chendall & Langfield-

Smith, 2007). Obtaining a balance between the two perspectives is the key to greater respect for marketing managers in boardrooms, as well as to better learning within the marketing department (Rust, Ambler, Carpenter, Kumar, & Srivastava 2004; Ambler, 2003). Firms pursue a number of different performance objectives simultaneously (Greve 2003). Managers therefore set goals and monitor success from a balanced scorecard perspective using financial, customer, internal, and learning based metrics. The degree of importance attached to a particular metric depends on the firm's marketing plan and strategy (Ambler, 2003).

There are several marketing success indices available in literature; however, the extent to which a metric is simple enough to be usable and comprehensive enough to assess marketing success determines companies' choice of marketing performance indices. The current study accommodates consumer commitment and advocacy as measures of marketing success.

2.4 Green Positioning Strategy and Marketing Success

Plethora of researches has been undertaken in relation to the nexus between green positioning and marketing success, including their sub-variables (Smith & Paladino, 2010; Chang & Wu, 2015; Suki, 2016). Though, many variables are available to measure green positioning, however, this research focused on green brand knowledge and emotional attributes. While on the other hand, consumer commitment and advocacy were used to measure marketing success. Smith and Paladino (2010) found that consumers who have information or knowledge about an organic food or product tend to not only purchase the product in future, but recommend such product to families and friends. This is due to positive attitude about the brand on how it delivers the environmental knowledge to the consumers.

According to Suki (2016), green brand knowledge is how a firm provides knowledge or the information about its product's uniqueness through the attributes of its brand. It is about a promise that the firm will provide to the consumers and environment. Chang and Wu (2015) found out that consumers expect to receive adequate information that are reliable so that they can enhance their knowledge about the green product, which in-turn affects their commitment to purchasing environmentally friendly products. Connel (2010) found that consumers with huge information or knowledge about a green brand are likely to be emotional towards eco friendly brands. The authors reported that green emotional attributes have strong impact on consumer patronage and loyalty. Chang and Wu (2015) revealed in their studies that consumers who have high level of knowledge about the environmental protection would have high emotional drive and propensity to promote such products by referring the product to others to use. In view of the above postulates, we state the following hypotheses:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between green brand knowledge and consumer commitment of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between green brand knowledge and advocacy of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between green emotional attributes and consumer commitment of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between green emotional attributes and advocacy of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

2.5 Effect of Environmental Consciousness on Green Positioning Strategy and Marketing Success

Due to environmental damages caused by organizational production processes and natural disasters, environmentalism has over the past three decades, become a crucial issue. According to Hugh (2018), It was not until 1960 that public recognition of the global environmental crisis arising from the 'tragedy of the commons', which is the idea that as self- interested individuals, humans will overuse shared resources such as land, air, fresh water and fish. This period, however, coincided with consumer environmental consciousness, which many be describe as a time of 'awakening'; the 1970s as a 'take action' period; the 1980s as an 'accountable' era; the 1990s as a 'power of the market place' period. During this era, consumers appear to have adequate knowledge of the fact that the environment is fragile and there is limit to which the various natural resources therein can be used (Suki, 2016).

Also, studies have it that consumer consciousness of the environment is an important input in various stages of the consumer decision making process when deciding to purchase a brand. Saha and Darnton (2005) found out in their study that green positioning strategy is more effective in a market that has high environmental alert consumers than the other way round. They revealed that green consumers tend to patronize brands with a high sense of green orientation and can even go out of their way to mobilize others to go for such brands. More so, Chen (2013) found that green consumers are committed and loyal to environmentally friendly products and services and this could serve as a competitive edge to companies with strong green initiatives. It is against this findings we state the hypothesis below:

Ho5: Environmental consciousness does not moderate the relationship between green positioning strategy and marketing success of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Due to the nature of this research as to the empirical investigation in to the relationship between green positioning strategy and marketing success of oil & gas companies; hence, the need to deploy survey means by administering questionnaire to elicit information from respondents. This type of arrangement requires a cross-sectional survey in accessing the study's elements. More so, the population of the research consists of host communities and consumers therein who may have been affected by oil & gas operations and/or are conscious of environmental safety. It is important to state that the research relied upon the 2006 Census publication of Rivers State population due to the inability of the research to ascertain the total number of people residing in the various host communities of the State and those who have consciously advocated for environmental sustainability. However, the research considered 10 oil & gas companies in Nigeria who have their operational base in the Niger Delta area. They include; Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Statoil, Shell, Agip, Petrobas, Total, Hardy, Nexen, and Addax.

Consequently, Rivers State has a population of 5198716 (2006 Census Report). However, Taro Yamen formula was used in ascertaining a sample size of 400. On this note, the research conveniently selected accessible respondents that answered questions raised in the research instrument. In addition, primary and secondary sources of data were used in obtaining information from both the field and other publications. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree; was used to design the research instrument. Again, research experts were consulted and Cronbach's Alpha test was used to validate and ascertain the consistency of the research instrument. Lastly, descriptive and inferential statistical tools were adopted to analyze data gotten from the field. Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient tool was used with the help of SPSS (version 21.0) in testing the 5 hypotheses formulated early in the study.

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

As earlier stated, the research relied on data from questionnaires distributed to respondents. This section was devoted for data presentation and testing of hypotheses.

Table 4.1 Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percent (%)
Distributed	400	100
Retrieved	372	93
Not retrieved	28	7
Retrieved usable	364	91

Source: field survey data, 2020

Table 4.1 above shows that a total 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed; however, 372 representing 93% were retrieved. More so, 28 copies were not retrieved, but 364 representing 91% were both retrieved and usable.

Table 4.2 Result of Test of Reliability

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Green Brand Knowledge	0.839
Green Emotional Attribute	0.819
Consumer Commitment	0.854
Advocacy	0.821
Environmental Consciousness	0.792

Source: SPSS Output, 2020

The table above shows the results of the reliability test. As can be noticed that since the various test results are more than 0.700 (70%) which happens to be the criterion for acceptance of the instrument. Hence, the research instrument is reliable.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between green brand knowledge and consumer commitment of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Table 4.3 Correlation Analysis between Green Brand Knowledge and Consumer Commitment

Correlations

			Green Brand Knowledge	Consumer Commitment
Spearman's rho	Green Knowledge	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.811**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	364	364

	Consumer Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.811**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	364	364

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

Source: Field Survey Data, 2020, SPSS Output.

Decision: The above table shows a Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient of 0.811 and probability value of 0.001. Since the PV which is 0.001 <0.01, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. This result indicates that there is positive and significant relationship between green brand knowledge and consumer commitment of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between green brand knowledge and advocacy of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Table 4.4 Correlation Analysis between Green Brand Knowledge and Advocacy

Correlations

			Green Brand Knowledge	Advocacy
Spearman's rho	Green Brand Knowledge	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.829**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	364	364
	Advocacy	Correlation Coefficient	.829**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	364	364

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

Source: Field Survey Data, 2020, SPSS Output.

Decision: The above table shows a Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient of 0.829 and probability value of 0.001. Since the PV which is 0.001 <0.01 we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. This result indicates that there is positive and significant relationship between green brand knowledge and advocacy of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Test of Hypothesis Three

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between green emotional attributes and consumer commitment of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Table 4.5 Correlation Analyses between Green Emotional Attributes and Consumer Commitment

Correlations

			Green Emotional Attributes	Consumer Commitment
Spearman's rho	Green Emotional Attributes	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.842**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	364	364
	Consumer Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.842**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	364	364

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

Source: Field Survey Data, 2020, SPSS Output.

Decision: The above table shows a Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient of 0.842 and probability value of 0.001. Since the PV which is 0.001 <0.01 we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. This result indicates that there is positive and significant relationship between green emotional attributes and consumer commitment of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Test of Hypothesis Four

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between green emotional attributes and advocacy of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Table 4.6 Correlation Analysis between Green Emotional Attributes and Advocacy

Correlations

			Green Emotional Attributes	Advocacy
Spearman's rho	Green Emotional Attributes	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.879**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001

		N	364	364
	Advocacy	Correlation Coefficient	.879**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	364	364

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

Source: Field Survey Data, 2020, SPSS Output.

Decision: The above table shows a Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient of 0.879 and probability value of 0.001. Since the PV which is 0.001 <0.01 we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. This result indicates that there is positive and significant relationship between green emotional attributes and advocacy of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Test of Hypothesis Five

Ho5: Environmental consciousness does not moderate the relationship between green positioning strategy and marketing success of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

Table 4.7 Correlation Analyses among Environmental Consciousness, Green Positioning Strategy and Marketing Success.

Correlations

			Green Positioning Strategy	Marketing Success
Spearman's rho	Green Positioning Strategy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.819**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
Environmental Consciousness		N	364	364
	Marketing Success	Correlation Coefficient	.819**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	364	364

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

Source: Field Survey Data, 2020, SPSS Output

Decision: The above table shows a Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient of 0.819 and probability value of 0.001. Since the PV which is 0.001 <0.01 we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. This result indicates that environmental consciousness has a positive and significant moderating effect on green positioning strategy and marketing success of oil & gas companies in Rivers State.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis one aimed to examine the relationship between green brand knowledge and consumer commitment of oil & gas companies in Rivers State. The hypothesis was tested using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient and result showed a correlation value of 0.811. This revealed a positive and significant relationship between green brand knowledge and consumer commitment. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. Also, hypothesis two aimed to examine whether there is a significant relationship between green brand knowledge and advocacy of oil & gas companies in Rivers State. The hypothesis was tested using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient and result showed a correlation value of 0.829. Our analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between green brand knowledge and advocacy. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. The findings however corroborates with the findings of Smith and Paladino (2010) when they revealed in their study that consumers who have information or knowledge about an organic food or product tend to not only purchase the product in the future, but recommend such products to families and friends. This is due to positive attitude about the brand on how the brand delivers environmental knowledge to the consumers.

Hypothesis three aimed to investigate the relationship between green emotional attributes and consumer commitment of oil & gas companies in Rivers State. The hypothesis was tested using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient and result showed a correlation value of 0.842. Our analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between green emotional attribute and consumer commitments. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. Hypothesis four aimed at investigating the relationship between green emotional attributes and advocacy of oil & gas companies in Rivers State. The hypothesis was tested using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient and result showed a correlation value of 0.879 our analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between green emotional attribute and advocacy. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. These findings were however in agreement with the results of Connel (2010) when the author found that consumers with huge information or knowledge about a green brand are likely to be emotional towards eco friendly brands. The authors reported that green emotional attributes have strong impact on consumer patronage and advocacy.

Hypothesis five aimed to examine the moderating effect of environmental consciousness on the relationship between green positioning strategy and marketing success of oil & gas companies in Rivers State. The hypothesis was tested using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient and result showed a significant value of 0.819. Our analysis revealed that environmental consciousness has a strong moderating influence on the relationship between green positioning strategy and marketing success of oil & gas companies in Rivers State. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. In line with the above finding; Saha and Darnton (2005) found out in their study that green positioning strategy is more effective in a market that has high environmental alert consumers than the other way round. They revealed that green consumers tend to patronize brands with a high sense of green orientation and can even go out of their way to mobilize others to go for such brands.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is evident that despite the huge contribution of the oil & gas industry to the Nigerian economy, however, activities of these companies have more often than not endanger the environment; therefore necessitated calls for environmentally friendly processes and procedures by several groups, including consumers. Consequently, findings of this research have indicated that oil & gas companies that adhere to eco friendly protocols or regulations in delivering products and services, not only attract environmentally conscious buyers to such brands, but also, key stakeholders, including host communities. In this regard, green positioning activities is viewed as a strategic instrument to compete favourably even in the long run.

More so, it is pertinent to further point that companies that position their products on green equity have huge advantage to command commitment from relevant stakeholders to act as apostles and/or advocates in spreading the good news of green value propositions to others. More so, business outcomes in terms of sustainable patronage would be improved in situations where target markets (consumer groups, association, or government) have adequate knowledge and consciousness of the need for environmental sustainability. When the target market knows and understand the importance of adhering to green policies, then their purchase decision would be directed to companies who engage and promote green programmes. In addition to the findings, this research therefore recommends that oil & gas companies who want to improve marketing success are encouraged to incorporate green value propositions in to their products and services, as this research has proven the possibility of improving consumer commitment and advocacy through green brand knowledge and emotional attributes.

Having address the problem identified earlier in the problem statement section, this study has successfully solved pressing contemporary environmental issues. Also, this research has added to extant literature by introducing alternative variables in operationalizing both the criterion and predictor variables. In this sense, the research has therefore contributed to existing thoughts in the area of green positioning and marketing success of oil & gas companies.

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