

**PERCEPTION ON KENYA POWER AND LIGHTING COMPANY'S
ADVERTISING STRATEGY
BY DOMESTIC CUSTOMERS IN NAIROBI**

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DECLARATION

This Management Research Project is my original work and has not been submitted for another degree qualification of this or any other University or Institution of learning.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my Husband Tonny, our two daughters Lyndah and Laura and who supported me morally during this program. Their firm support and their understanding gave me strength to carry on even when the challenge of balancing my office work and studies seemed unbearable.

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ABBREVIATIONS

KPLC-Kenya Power and Lighting Company

IPP-Independent Power Producers

KWH-KiloWatt Hours

TV-Television

AD-Advertisement

ERC-Electricity Regulatory Commission

V-Volts

ASK-Agricultural Society of Kenya

ABSTRACT

Firms adopt various strategies in order to remain competitive in increasingly global and liberal market. One of the strategies that have been employed includes advertising strategy. However, seeing as advertising clutter has increased tremendously and is more intense than ever, the advertiser would love nothing more than to be able to predict or influence what a consumer pays attention to, what moves him to make a purchase, or what prevents an individual from doing so.

The objectives of the study were to establish the awareness level of KPLC's advertisements by its domestic consumers in Nairobi and to determine the perception of these consumers on KPLC's advertising strategy. This was a descriptive research which targeted all KPLC domestic consumers in Nairobi. Data was collected in the month of October; 2010. A sample size of 120 customers was interviewed using convenient sampling. Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and a response rate of 87% was achieved. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize and analyze the data. Frequency distribution, percentages, mean score and standard deviation were used to determine the extent of awareness of the KPLC'S advertisements by the respondents and their perception towards the company's advertising strategy.

The study findings indicated that most respondents were male, married, and are in the age bracket of (25-39) years, had university and college degrees. The findings further showed that all respondents were aware of KPLC's promotional activities and identified

advertising as was one of the prominent activities. The findings further found out that the most outstanding advert was Mulika mwizi, Easypay, Badilisha Bulb and StimaLoan. The other adverts such as umeme pamoja scored low in awareness and none of the respondents remembered E-bill. The main sources of awareness were radio and television, Billboards newspapers and vehicle branding. Banners and brochures and magazines were the least sources of awareness.

In regard to consumer perception, majority of respondents agreed that KPLC was now advertising more than before , and appreciates that advertising has helped people to be aware of KPLC's products, they agree that advertising helps support company activities such as anti-vandalism and like the use of different languages in radio that has ensured reach to diverse audiences. KPLC's advertising strategy works; this is evident by the high awareness level of the adverts and a positive attitude by the consumers towards advertising strategy. The main limitation of the study was that self-administered questionnaire was used which was unable to prod the respondents especially on advertisements.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Modern marketing calls for more than developing a good product, pricing it attractively and making it accessible. Companies must also communicate with present and potential stakeholders and the general public (Kotler et al, 2000). Every company is inevitably cast into the role of a communicator and a promoter. For most companies, the question is not whether to communicate but rather how to.

Increased competition, globalization and rapid technological advancement have become the major challenges facing many organizations. These have had significant impact on most organization's efficiency, productivity and competitiveness (Chemayiek, 2005). Even organizations that were not previously market focused are now feeling the effects of the dynamic environment. The impact of technology too has ensured that people are now more informed and more information seeking than before. In fact, they effortlessly acquire knowledge on market trends of virtually every product or service. Today's consumer has become fully aware of what is best for him/her at any moment. Globalisation on the other hand has brought about the increase in the choice of products a consumer can choose from.

Amid these challenges, firms are now trying to brace for a tougher future, they must step up the plate to offer the information in order to close the gap between their products and customer awareness. As a way of overcoming these challenges, organizations are now employing marketing strategies and focusing on the marketing mix; which consist of the

price, promotion, place and product. According to Kibera (1988), marketing mix is a set of controllable variables that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the market. It therefore consists of everything the firm can do to influence the demands of its goods or services.

One of the strategies that have been applied is the use of marketing communication, which acts as tactical process of promoting the other elements of the marketing mix. Marketing communication are messages and related media used to communicate with a market. It is the "promotion" part of the 'Marketing Mix' or the '4 Ps': price, place, promotion, and product. The primary goal of marketing communication is to reach a defined audience to affect its behavior by informing, persuading and reminding. Successful marketing communication relies on a combination of options called the promotional mix. Keller (1998) notes that the firms marketing communication contribute to brand equity. That is, effective communication enables the formation of brand awareness and a positive image. One of the tools of marketing communication is advertising, the others include; sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, and personal selling.

Advertising is a promotional activity that has come to bridge the gap between the company's product and consumer awareness. It ensures that the brand exists in the minds of customers not only through their experience but also because of its long term effects. Arens et al (2006), defines advertising as, the structured and composed non-personal communication of information, usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods, services or ideas) by an identified sponsor through various media. He further argues that, it has a subtle ability to reach out and touch everyone living and working in the modern world.

Effective planning of the promotional elements of the marketing mix requires an appreciation of how communication process works .The process of communication involves the sender, encoding of the message, the medium(channel),the receiver, decoding ,feedback ,noise and distortion. The market is activated through information flows. The amount and kind of information customers have about the offering and their reaction to that information influence the way buyers perceive the market offering -the seller. Engel et al (1991), alludes that the influence of communication depends on what happens at each stage of information processing. An advertisement must capture attention, be accurately understood, be retained in memory, and yielded to by the target audience in order to have persuasive impact. An advert should be memorable in that it attracts and holds attention and must register its intended message and hence achieve its objective.

The human brain is flooded with enormous amounts of information, which is collected by our senses, only some of the information is processed instinctively without deep thoughts. People differ along two dimensions. The first is their way of thinking; some people are logical and rational; they process information successively. Some people are spontaneous and creative; they perceive things as a whole. It is amazing how individuals may look at situation; yet see it differently (Shiffmann, 1994).

The key to success is to understand customers' needs for interaction and involvement and developing strategies to maximise them (Smith et al, 2006).The only way an audience (customers) can get your advertising message is through perception. Bowee et al (1995),

define perception as, the process of being exposed to a stimulus, paying attention to some degree, and then interpreting the received message. He argues further that, success at each step is crucial to effective advertising. Consumers are exposed to hundreds or even thousands of commercial messages every day. They may appear in the form of billboards, newspapers adverts, television commercials, coupons, publicity, event sponsorship, Short Message Services (SMSs), emails and so on. Competitors on the other hand are struggling to get their messages to the same audiences, and audiences routinely misinterpret, confuse or ignore the messages and so success of an advert is never assured.

1.1.1 The Concept of Perception

Perception can be defined as the process of receiving, organising and assigning meaning to information stimuli detected by our five senses. Our brains attempt to make sense out of the stimuli to which we are exposed. According to Kotler et al (2000), what we perceive is the meaning we give something. Perception is actually the critical activity that links the individual consumer to group situation and marketer influence. He further adds that perception depends not only on the physical stimuli but also on the stimuli's relation to the surrounding field and on conditions within the individual.

From the definition of perception, it is clear that perception is composed of various sub—processes; these include receiving, selecting, organizing, interpreting, checking and reacting to stimuli. Through perception people process information input into decisions and actions. In other words; it is a screen or filter through which information passes before having an effect on consumers. When consumers perceive marketing stimuli, they also process the

information contained in these stimuli. Thus there is a close parallel between consumer perception and information processing (Schiffmann et al, 1994).

Information processing is a series of activities by which stimuli are transformed into information and stored (Hawkins et al, 1992). The processing of information has four major steps; exposure, attention, interpretation, and memory. The first three of these constitute the perception process. Exposure occurs when a stimulus such as a billboard comes within the range of a person's sensory receptor nerves-such as vision. Attention occurs when the receptor nerves pass the sensations on to the brain for processing. Interpretation is the assignment of meaning to the received sensations. Memory is the short-term use of the meaning for intermediate decision making or the longer-term retention of the meaning. According to Hawkins et al (1992), the four steps suggest a linear flow from exposure to memory. However, these processes occur virtually simultaneously and are clearly interactive. That is, our memory influences the information we are exposed to, attend to, and the interpretations we assign. At the same time, memory itself is being shaped by the information it is receiving.

1.1.2 Advertising Strategy

Advertising is part of the promotional mix along with personal selling, sales promotion and publicity all of which are used to sell or to win acceptance for an organization's product, services or ideas. It involves presenting the message to a mass audience (Kibera et al, 1988).Arens et al (2006) defines advertising as the structured and composed non-personal communication of information, usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods, services and ideas) by an identified sponsor through various media. Whereas marketing aims to

identify markets that will purchase a product (business) or support an idea and then facilitate that purchase, advertising is the paid communication by which information about the product or idea is transmitted to potential consumers. It is used by businesses and non-profit organizations to communicate messages about themselves, their products, services, and causes.

An advertising strategy is a campaign developed to communicate ideas about products and services to potential consumers in the hopes of convincing them to buy those products and services. Smith et al (2006), note that an advertising strategy summarizes broadly what to say (message), how to say it (execution, tone, or creative strategy), who to say it to (the target audience), where to say it (media choice or media strategy) when to say it (timing) and sometimes how much it will cost (budget). It simply describes what the ad is going to say and how it is going to say it by identifying target markets, the position of the product in the market and the marketing mix.

The Advertising industry in Kenya is represented by a body called Association of Practitioners in Advertising (APA).APA represents the agency point of view to advertisers by helping them identify and find solutions to problems of its members. It advises on legal and regulatory matters, and actively promotes and participates in the provision of media research. Its mission is to serve, promote, and anticipate collective interests of members, advertising agencies and in particular define, develop and help maintain the standards of professional practice within the advertising business (Sokoni 2006).

1.1.3 Overview of Kenya Power and Lighting Company Limited

Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) Limited is a limited liability company responsible for the transmission, distribution and retail of electricity throughout Kenya. The company owns and operates the national transmission and distribution grid, and is responsible for the scheduling and dispatch of electricity to more than 1.5 million customers throughout Kenya. The Company has been in existence since 1922, when it was first incorporated as the East African Power and Lighting Company. The company changed its name in 1983 and it is domiciled in the Republic of Kenya. KPLC also develops, operates and maintains the power distribution network to reach new customers and ensure delivery of service to customers. It is currently the sole electricity distributor in the country, and buys electricity in bulk from KenGen, Independent Power Producers (IPPs) Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCLA) and Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited (TANESCO). The vision of the company is 'To provide world class power that delights our customers' and the mission of the company is 'powering people for better lives' (www.kplc.co.ke, August 14, 2010).

KPLC is divided into four administrative regions: Nairobi, Coast, Mt. Kenya and West regions. KPLC's customers are categorized into five categories, that is, Domestic Consumers (DC), the Small Commercial (SC), Commercial/Industrial (CI), the Interruptible (IT) and the Street Lighting (SL). DC are customers that are metered at 240V or 415V and whose energy consumption does not also exceed 15,000kWH per month. The small commercial are business consumers such as shops, small industries, schools, hospitals, hotels who are also metered at 240V or 415V and their consumption does not exceed 15,000kWH. The

commercial/industrial consumers are those customers whose consumption exceed 15,000kWH and has no limitation on energy consumption. Interruptible consumers (IT) off – peak are metered at 240V and 415V and also with consumption not exceeding 15,000kWH and the Street Lighting are metered at 240V with unlimited energy consumption (ERC Press Statement,2008).

Like other public sector as well as private organizations, KPLC has continued to be subjected to the same dynamic environment. The last decade has seen the company face increased pressure to improve its performance. Namu (2006) highlights empowered customers, the government, the regulatory body; Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC) and external development partners (donor agencies) as sources of this pressure. To ensure survival the company has had to adapt to modern operational, financial and marketing strategies. According to the KPLC policy paper (2003), the company cannot therefore afford to be left behind in adapting to a market focused approach to doing business. KPLC has thus endeavored to take advantage of modern business practices with the recognition and establishment of the marketing function as an important step in this direction (Njuguna 2004). The marketing function draws marketing plans aimed at transforming the company into a marketing oriented organization that strives to meet the ever increasing and changing customer wants and expectations.

The company has consequently made use of marketing mix as a strategy. Marketing mix elements used include promotion, distribution and improving the quality of electricity delivery. KPLC does not have control over the pricing of the product as this done by ERC.

However in the recent time the company has come up with a credit facility-StimaLoan that has enabled potential consumers access electricity easily.

One of KPLC's strategies includes advertising strategy. Lately KPLC adverts can be seen/heard in almost all corners of the country and the internet. With the creation of the marketing department in 2006, the company embarked on the application of the marketing mix, products such as 'umeme pamoja' were created and therefore it became inevitable to advertise to promote the product and thus the first attempt at product advertising. KPLC undertakes both product as well as institutional advertising. In institutional advertising KPLC has been advertising in the newspaper especially on issues of power interruptions, efficient and safe use of electricity (Reddy Kilowatt campaigns, 'Mke Nyumbani', 'badilisha bulb'). Currently (October 2010), the company is running an educative ad christened StimaFlow; it uses top management executives including the CEO to inform customers and the general public about the company's offerings. Over the years, KPLC's products awareness programmes have been undertaken using both the above the line and below the line strategies..

Above the line strategies employed involves both print and broadcast advertising. Below the line advertisement include outreach programmes by KPLC Marketing staff through *Barazas*, Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK) shows, sponsored shows and exhibitions, road shows, distributed brochures during shows and exhibitions and in KPLC offices, fliers are attached to electricity bills and, door to door contacts by the marketing staff. Currently KPLC, advertises in the press; newspapers and magazines, internet; its website, bill boards, walls,

bus stop shades, the company vehicles, Public Service Vehicles, television, radio, brochures, banners, posters, calendars, T-shirts and other promotional materials. To reach mass media the company uses road shows. (KPLC Marketing Reports and Meeting Procedures).KPLC'S products that have been advertised include Umeme Pamoja,Easypay,E-Bill, StimaLoan, Mulika Mwizi, StimaFlow and Badilisha Bulb.The Company uses ScanAd, an advertising agency in the creation and placing of its adverts in the media. The agency is responsible for advert creation and market research on its environment, as well as media planning and placement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Advertising is one strategy that companies use to communicate to its customers. It continues to grow both in importance and complexity. We are seeing changes; in technology, in the creative process, media choices and even the audience. Challenges and opportunities for advertisers include better targeting, enhanced creativity, new media horizons and results-driven advertising.

It is therefore imperative for companies advertising, to determine how consumers perceive such strategies as advertising so as to determine if the company is heading in the right direction. The only way to know with any accuracy how your advertising strategy is working is to ask the consumer, the opinions of who can be gathered in several ways (Bovee et al, 1995). This stems from the fact that the more you know about your audience, the more effective your adverts will be and the more you save. The need for a company to conduct market research is therefore paramount to understand the customers' perception of its products, usage, and corporate image as it continues to influence customers to its advantage.

The Kenyan electricity industry has entered a phase of rapid expansion. Massive infrastructure development is being conducted in the power generation, transmission and distribution sectors. Strong economic growth, coupled with government-backed plans to achieve 100 per cent electricity connectivity by 2030, is underpinning exciting times for the industry. The role of KPLC cannot therefore be ignored; the Company plays an important role in the socio-economic development of the country (KPLC Annual Report and Financial Statements).

However, empowered customers, pressure from the government and donor agencies, as well as increased competition from other sources of energy, has forced KPLC to re-evaluate its strategic position. KPLC now regards market intelligence as critical to understanding trends in the energy market and how to influence them to their advantage (Njuguna, 2004). Whereas it is mistakenly 'perceived' that KPLC enjoys a monopoly in the market, recent developments points towards increased competition from other energy sources such as LPG (cooking gas), solar, petroleum fuel as well as wood fuel-this is according to a customer satisfaction survey done by KPLC in August 2010. KPLC marketing strategy has therefore undertaken to focus on the level of competition from other energy sources and device strategic ways to counter it (KPLC Policy Paper, 2003).

Hawkins et al (1992), alludes that knowledge of the perception process is an essential guide to marketing strategy. Mwangi (2001), and Chemayiek (2005), carried out studies on perception. However, the focus of these studies was on other service industries mainly banking, telecommunication and airline transport. Njuguna (2004), and Namu (2006) did

studies on KPLC but it did not involve advertising. Studies on advertising have also been done, such studies include: Mumbi (2006), Wamarema (2006), and Radier (2003). The focus of these studies was on perception on use of humor in advertising, influence of image advertising and Kenyan advertising agencies. There is however been no study carried out on the role and impact of advertising by a local public corporation. This study therefore seeks to address the perception of customers on KPLC advertising strategies.

Since KPLC started advertising its products in 2006, there has been no study to determine the consumer perception on its advertising strategies. According to Kotler et al (2000), perception is very important since it determines the consumers buying choices as influenced by the external stimuli in his surroundings. The information on consumer choice will act as a basis to determine whether advertising strategies work or not. The study therefore is intended to close the gap by seeking answers to the following questions;

- i. Are consumers aware of KPLC's advertisements?
- ii. How do the consumers perceive KPLCs advertising strategies?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To establish the extent of customer awareness of the KPLC's Advertisements.
- ii. To determine customer perception on Kenya Power and Lighting Company's advertising strategies.

1.4 Importance of the Study

The findings of this study may be useful to KPLC in selecting the appropriate advertising strategies to position it in times of increased external pressures. It will also help KPLC answer the question of whether advertising as a strategy works and will furthermore create deeper understanding of how a public company which is perceived as a monopoly could use advertising strategies to its advantage. In addition this will also increase understanding of the perception of customers towards past advertising strategy, as well as provide practical solutions and facilitate development of promotional strategies aimed at influencing customer behavior.

The findings to will be useful to potential and future entrants into the industry .The study will help them select the appropriate strategies that will properly and positively communicate to the consumer.

The findings will also be important to future researchers and scholars in using the study as a source of reference and stimulating interests for further research

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, literature on meaning and importance of perception, dynamics of perception, measurement of perception, meaning and importance of advertising strategy, meaning and reasons for advertising, benefits of advertising and advertising strategies has been covered.

2.2 Meaning and Importance of Perception

Britannica Concise Encyclopedia defines perception as, the process of registering sensory stimuli as meaningful experience. Perception is the manner in which a person understands someone or something. It is determined by both physiological and psychological characteristics. It correlates, integrates and comprehends diverse sensations to arrive at a meaningful conclusion. A person's buying choices are influenced by four major psychological factors- motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes; this is according to Kotler et al (1999). He further adds that Perception depends not only on the physical stimuli but also on the stimuli's relation to the surrounding field and on conditions within the individual.

In philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science, perception is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information. The word "perception" comes from the Latin words *perception*, *percipio*, and means "receiving, collecting, and action of taking possession, apprehension with the mind or senses (Wikipedia, 2010). Kibera et al (1988), define perception as the process by which we attribute meaning to incoming stimuli received through our five senses. Our brain attempts to make sense out of the stimuli to which we are

exposed to. What we perceive is the meaning we give to something sensed (Kotler, 2000). It is further said that perception is the critical activity that links the individual consumer to group, situation, and marketer influences (Hawkins et al, 1992).

Perception is largely selective. Shiffman et al (1994) alludes that consumers exercise a great deal of selectivity as to which aspects of the environment –stimuli they perceive. From the large number of stimuli available in our complex world; we choose the ones that will be given attention. We pay attention to considerably fewer stimuli than we are exposed to and understand only some of them. Selectivity of perception serves as filter through which potentially important or favourable experiences will be allowed to flow while potentially unimportant or unfavourable experiences are locked out. Shiffman et al(1994) further adds that consumer selection of the stimuli from the environment are based on the interaction of their expectations and motives with the stimulus itself. Kotler (2000) argues that people can emerge with different perceptions of the same object because of three perceptual processes; selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention.

(Kotler, 2001) contends that, we tend to pay attention by exception. That is, of all the marketing stimuli our senses are exposed to, only those with the power to capture and hold attention have the potential of being perceived. According to Loudon et al (1979), in selective attention, consumers tend to screen out some stimuli and notice some because people are exposed to tremendous amount of daily stimuli. An average person is exposed to over 1500 adverts a day. What an individual chooses to notice depends on his situation in terms of his needs, what he anticipates or stimuli with large deviations. Loudon et al (1979) further

describes selective distortions as the tendency to twist information into personal meanings and interpret information in a way that will fit our preconceptions. This means that new information is compared with a person's existing store of knowledge or frame of reference. If an inconsistency is discovered, the new information will be distorted to conform to the established beliefs. Unfortunately, there is not much that marketers can do about selective distortion (Mumbi, 2006). Selective retention on the other hand is the process in which people forget much of what they learn but retain information that supports their attitudes and beliefs.

The processes of perception routinely alter what humans see. When people view something with a preconceived concept about it, they tend to take those concepts and see them whether or not they are there. This problem stems from the fact that humans are unable to understand new information, without the inherent bias of their previous knowledge. A person's knowledge creates his or her reality as much as the truth, because the human mind can only contemplate that to which it has been exposed. When objects are viewed without understanding, the mind will try to reach for something that it already recognizes, in order to process what it is viewing. That which most closely relates to the unfamiliar from our past experiences, makes up what we see when we look at things that we don't comprehend.

Perception is a requisite property of animate action; that without perception action would be unguided, and without action perception would serve no purpose. Animate actions require both perception and motion, and perception and movement can be described as 'two sides of the same coin', the coin is action (Wikipedia, 2010). Marketers are interested in perception because it involves what consumers believe to provide satisfaction effectively in the market

place, marketers must understand how all their marketing activities are perceived because perception greatly influences buyer behaviour (Kibera et al, 1988).

Through perception people process information input into decisions and actions. In other words; it is a screen or filter through which information passes before having an effect on consumers. When consumers perceive marketing stimuli, they also process the information contained in the stimuli. Thus there is a close parallel between consumer perception and information processing (Schiffmann et al, 1994).

Hawkins et al (1992) defines information processing, as a series of activities by which stimuli are transformed into information and stored. The processing of information has four major steps; exposure, attention, interpretation, and memory. The first three of these constitute the perceptual process. Exposure occurs when a stimulus such as a billboard comes within the range of a person's sensory receptor nerves-such as vision. Attention occurs when the receptor nerves pass the sensations on to the brain for processing. Interpretation is the assignment of meaning to the received sensations. Memory is the short-term use of the meaning for intermediate decision making or the longer-term retention of the meaning. Exposure occurs when stimulus comes within a range of our sensory receptor nerves, for example the KPLC adverts have been exposed through the various advertising media; the press, billboard, TV, walls, internet and radio advertising.

When dealing with perception, stimulus and receptors are important aspects. A stimulus is any unit of input to any of the five senses, which includes products, advertisements, and

commercials among others. Sensory receptors on the other hand are human organs, that is, the eye, ear, mouth, nose and skin which receive the sensory inputs. For an individual to be exposed to a stimulus it requires only that the stimulus be placed within the person's relevant environment. The individual need not receive the stimulus for exposure to have occurred (Hawkins, 1992). We seek information that we think will help us to achieve our goals. We are exposed to a large number of stimuli on a more or less random basis during our daily activities. Attention occurs when the stimulus activates one or more sensory receptor nerves and the resulting sensations go to the brain for processing. Attention is determined by stimulus, the individual and the situation (Finn, 1988). Interpretation is the assignment of meaning to sensations. It is a function of the pattern formed by the characteristics of the stimulus, the individual and the situation. It involves both a cognitive or factual component and an affective or emotional response (Hawkins, 1992). Cognitive interpretation is a process whereby the stimuli are placed into existing categories of meaning, which is an interactive process (Cohen and Basu, 1987). Affective interpretation is the emotional or feeling response triggered by a stimulus such as an advert (Aaker, 1988). Memory plays a critical role in guiding the perception process. It has a long-term storage component and a short-term active component. These are not distinct entities; active memory is simply that portion of total memory that is currently activated or in use.

Consumers protect themselves from bombardment of stimuli by blocking such as stimuli from achieving conscious awareness. This is referred to as perceptual blockage. People will forget much that they will learn but tend to retain information that supports their attitudes and

beliefs. They remember only those aspects of a product or message that they perceive as necessary to them.

2.3 Dynamics of Perception

These are perceptual mechanisms that are used in processing received information. Perception is not a function of sensory input alone, rather it is the result of different kinds of inputs which interact to form personal pictures, the perception that each individual experiences. One type of input is physical input from the outside environment, while the other type of input is provided by individuals themselves in the form of certain predispositions, such as expectations. Each of these factors can serve to increase or decrease the probability that the stimulus will be perceived and each affect the customer's selectivity, exposure to and selective awareness of the stimulus itself (Kotler, 2006). The consumer selection of the stimuli from the environment is based on the interaction of expectations and motives with the stimulus itself.

Perceptions vary from person to person. Different people perceive different things about the same situation. But more than that, we assign different meanings to what we perceive. And the meanings might change for a certain person. One might change one's perspective or simply make things mean something else (Shiffman et al, 1992).

Although, we live in an 'information society', we can have too much of a good thing. Consumers are in a state of information overload, exposed to far more information than they are able or willing to process. Because the brain's capacity to process information is limited, consumers are very selective as to which stimuli they recognize and they organize sub-

consciously according to their psychological principles giving meaning to such a stimuli. Subjectively, this is in accordance with their needs, expectations and experiences. Perception is a result of two different inputs that interact to form a personal picture. Perception occurs in stages: attention, distortion and retention (Mumbi 2006).

The relationship between perception and advertising can be explained using the Consumer Perception Theory (CPT) which is any attempt to understand how a consumer's perception of a product or service influences their behavior (www.ehow.com, August 2010). CPT illustrates and explains one method through which advertising is effective. There are two basic concepts that need to be accepted in order for CPT to be understood: cultural filtration and perceptual reality.

Cultural filtration is simply the reason that people perceive day-to-day life differently from one another. Each person is unique and has had a unique set of life events that shape the way they experience. An easy way of understanding cultural filtration is by comparing the cultural filter to a pair of sunglasses. When we wear tinted glasses we view the world as being the color of the lens, the same applies with our cultural filters. We gather our experiences on a wide variety of topics (politics, education, experience, vocabulary, travel, geographic location, cultural knowledge, tradition, family, heritage, race, ethnicity, sexuality, habits and so on) and form our own unique cultural filter (Mumbi, 2006). It is through this unique filter that we experience everything, including advertising. In the model above the pink tinted rectangle represents the cultural filter.

The process of CPT starts with the consumer: an individual toward which the message is directed. The consumer must first have a perceived need or want, and then actively experience an advertisement in the product category where the need or want exists. It is a catalyst for the model if this advertisement occurs at strategic timing in the process. After exposure, the consumer forms an opinion about the product. This perception becomes the reality of that product to the consumer. It is possible that this truth could change with exposure to competitive messages from a wide variety of sources (other media, friends, advice columns and so on). If, however, the product is perceived, and therefore assigned the truth, of being positive it is then evaluated as to whether or not it fills the need or want. If it does indeed fit the need, it is likely that the consumer will proceed to the purchase stage of the model. In the purchase stage, the consumer decides to purchase or not to purchase the product (Mumbi, 2006).

Arens et al (2006), notes that classics studies show that people take action only when they have a goal .More important however, they must perceive the goal and accept it as such before they will act. Advertisers must first help potential customers perceive the existence of the product (awareness) and its value in supplying a want or need (utility).once customers are aware of the product and its value and establish the goal of satisfying their want or need, they will be motivated to act. The greater the customer need, the greater the potential value or utility of the need.

2.4 Measurement of Perception

Measurement in research is a procedure for assigning symbols, letters, or numbers to empirical properties of variables in compliance with a set of rules (Cooper et al,

2003). Variables being measured in research may be classified as objects or properties. Objects include things of ordinary experience, such as tables, cars and so on, while properties are the characteristics of the objects and include physical; that is weight, height and so on, and psychological properties which include attitudes, perception and intelligence. In consumer behaviour, perception research has been used to study a wide range of marketing strategy issues. Schiffman et al (1992), confirms that perception research is undertaken to ascertain the likelihood that consumers will accept a proposed new product idea, to gauge why a firm's target audience has not reacted more favorably to its revised promotional theme or to learn how target customers are likely to react to a proposed change in the firm's packaging and label.

A variety of techniques have been devised to measure perception. Chemayiek (2005) used scaling techniques to study perception of customers towards rebranding by Kenya Airways. One of the commonly used scaling techniques is Likert Scale strategy which was developed by Likert in 1932. Usually the individual is asked not only if they agree or disagree to the statement, but also to indicate the extent to which they agree by choosing one of the following five categories: Strongly agree; Agree; Neutral/Don't know; Disagree; and Strongly disagree. This produces a numerical score and a value is given to each category. Semantic Differential Scale is another technique that was developed by Osgood et al in 1957. It comprises a number of semantic scales based on bipolar objectives (for example good/bad, hot/cold and so on). The respondents are asked to rate a concept in terms of a positioning between +3 and -3. Proponents of the technique identified three main clusters of similar scales, which they labeled: Evaluation, Potency and Activity. This accounted for nearly 50%

of the total 'meaning' of the concept - irrespective of the concept, the adjectives used or the respondents interviewed, (Williams, 1997). It is further alluded that semantic differential can be used to develop graphic consumer profiles of the concept under study (Schiffmann et al, 1992). Semantic differential profiles are also used to compare consumer perceptions of competitive products, and to indicate areas for product improvement when perceptions of the existing product are measured against perceptions of the 'ideal' product.

The other techniques include Rank Order Scales where subjects are asked to rank items such as products or retail stores in order of preference in terms of some criterion, such as overall quality or price/value for the money. Guttman's Scalogram Analysis which was designed by sociologist Louis Guttman in 1950 is based on the cumulative ordering of items. It aims at determining the underlying order within a series of questions by means of obtaining dichotomous responses i.e. the respondent is required to answer 'yes' or 'no' to each question. Scalogram Analysis is a very useful technique for examining small shifts or changes in perceptions and while such scales do not have equal-appearing intervals, they are generally reliable (Williams, 1997). Another technique is Thurstone Scale technique which was designed in 1929. It requires the collection of as many statements as possible about the issue towards which perceptions are to be measured. These statements must be simple and unambiguous and must distinguish between different perceptions that people may hold towards the issue.

2.5 Meaning and Importance of Advertising Strategy

Advertising is part of the promotional mix along with personal selling, sales promotion and publicity all of which are used to sell or win acceptance for an organization's product, services or ideas. It involves presenting the message to a mass audience (Kibera et al, 1988). Arens et al (2006) defines advertising, as 'the structured and composed non-personal communication of information, usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods, services and ideas) by an identified sponsors through various media'. According to American Marketing Association (AAA), advertising can be defined as 'any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor'. Etzel et al (2007), agrees with this definition and adds that, it consists of all activities involved in presenting through the media a non-personal, sponsor identified, paid for message about a product or organization. Arens et al (1989), further describes advertising as a communication process, a marketing process, an economic and social process, a public relations process or information of persuasion process depending on one's point of view.

The reasons for advertising vary, Arens et al (2006) observes that marketers earnestly believe in the benefits that advertising brings to the society. Advertising encourages the development and speeds the acceptance of new products and technologies, it fosters employment, gives consumers and businesses a wider variety of choice. By encouraging mass production, advertising keeps prices down and stimulates healthy competition between producers which in turn benefits all. Advertising also pays promotes higher standards of living; it pays for most of our news media and subsidizes the arts, it supports freedom of the press and provides means to disseminate public information about important social issues. Arens et al (2006), further adds that advertising plays a key role in creating awareness of a product and a sense

of value in customers mind. By using unusual sounds effects, brilliant light, or sensuous music ,for example a Television(TV) commercial can capture a customer's attention and stimulate his/her emotion towards the goal of need or want.

Arens further argues that, aside from marketing, advertising also serves several other functions in the economy and in the society. The economic impact of advertising can be likened to the opening shot in billiards-a chain reaction that affects the company as well as its competitors, customers and the business community. On a broader scale, advertising is often considered the trigger on a country's mass distribution system, enabling manufacturers to produce the products people want in high volume, at low prices with standardized quality.

Johnson and Scholes define strategy as ‘ the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term: which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholder expectations’. On the other hand, Kotler et al (2000), defines marketing strategy as a process that can allow an organization to concentrate its limited resources on the greatest opportunities to increase sales and achieve a sustainable competitive. Marketing strategy includes the long-run vision and objectives of the company as well as an articulation of the specific strategic position it will aim to occupy n the market place in the years to come. A marketing strategy should be centered on the key concept that customer satisfaction is the main goal. Aaker(1988) contends that marketing strategy blends elements of the marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion): promotional strategy integrates elements of the promotional mix (personal selling, advertising, public relations and sales

promotion). Advertising strategy blends the elements of the creative mix (target audience, product concept, communication media and advertising message).

An advertising strategy is a campaign developed to communicate ideas about products and services to potential consumers in the hopes of convincing them to buy those products and services. Smith et al (2006), note that an advertising strategy summarizes broadly what to say (message), how to say it (execution, tone, or creative strategy), who to say it to (the target audience), where to say it (media choice or media strategy) when to say it (timing) and sometimes how much it will cost (budget). It simply describes what the ad is going to say and how it is going to say it by identifying target markets, the position of the product in the market and the marketing mix.

This strategy, when built in a rational and intelligent manner, will reflect other business considerations (overall budget, brand recognition efforts) and objectives (public image enhancement, market share growth) as well. An advertising strategy determines the character of the company's public face. Even though a small business has limited capital and is unable to devote as much money to advertising as a large corporation, it can still develop a highly effective advertising campaign. The key is creative and flexible planning, based on an in-depth knowledge of the target consumer and the avenues that can be utilized to reach that consumer (Arens et al, 2006).

According to Bovee et al (1989), the following elements of the advertising strategy need to be considered: target audience, product concept, communication media, and advertising message. These elements are at the core of an advertising strategy, and are often referred to

as the creative mix. A rigid advertising strategy often leads to a loss of market share. Therefore, the core elements of the advertising strategy need to mix in a way that allows the message to envelope the target consumer, providing ample opportunity for this consumer to become acquainted with the advertising.

Bovee et al (1989), further adds that as a business begins one of the major goals of advertising must be to generate awareness of the business and its products. Once the business' reputation is established and its products are positioned within the market, the amount of resources used for advertising will decrease as the consumer develops a kind of loyalty to the product. Ideally, this established and ever-growing consumer base will eventually aid the company in its efforts to carry their advertising message out into the market, both through its purchasing actions and its testimonials on behalf of the product or service. When an advertiser places one of their advertisements into some media, they want their advertisement to appeal to the readers of that particular media. They could have the exact same message, but considering their audience, they could make it more effective if they use a different strategy to market their product.

Advertising's primary mission is to reach prospective customers and influence their awareness and attitudes and buying behavior. To do this an advertiser must make the marketing communication process work effectively. Successful advertising people understand the complexity of human behavior. Consumer behavior is governed by three personal processes; perception, learning and motivation. These processes determine how consumers see the world around them, how they learn information and habits and how they actualize their personal needs and motives (Arens et al 2006).

2.6 Advertising Objectives

According to Kotler et al (2002), the first step in developing an advertising program is to set the advertising objectives. An advertising objective is a specific communication task to be accomplished with a specific target audience during a specified period of time. Kotler et al further add that the objectives must flow from prior decisions on the target market, market positioning, and the marketing mix. The marketing positioning and the marketing mix strategies define the job that advertising must do in the total marketing program and they should provide the yardstick for measuring the effectiveness of an advertising campaign. The choice of advertising objectives should be based on a thorough analysis of the current market situation. Advertising is one part of the promotional mix, and should therefore be set in line with overall promotional and marketing objectives, which in turn will relate to the organizations' overall corporate objectives. Every ad campaign should have clearly defined objectives which must be defined to give the development of the campaign direction and purpose. The determination of advertising objectives occurs after a thorough situation analysis has been conducted and the marketing and promotional issues facing the company or brand have been identified. The objectives are based on role of these elements play in the marketing program.

Advertisers must consider what they want to achieve with the advertising campaign (Kibera et al, 1988). Broadly; however, there are three main categories of advertising objectives a business might set itself in terms of whether it seeks to inform, persuade or remind the target audience (Kotler et al, 2002). Effective advertising will stimulate demand for a product and build brand equity and brand franchise.

Etzel et al (2007), further adds, that some advertising objectives are operational while others are not operational. An example of an objective which is not operational includes objectives that involve an immediate increase in sales. The reason for this not being operational is because; advertising is not the only factor influencing sales growth and its difficult to isolate the contributing role of advertising. Its contribution is often over the long run. The other reason is because advertising does not provide a practical guidance for decision makers.

2.7 Types of Advertisement

According to Kibera et al (1988), there are a number of types of advertising, and the type used by an organization depends upon the objectives of its advertising campaign. Arens et al (2006) classifies advertising into four main criteria: by target audience, geographic area, medium and purpose.

Arens et al (2006) further notes that, advertising is usually aimed at a particular segment of the population –the target audience which includes consumers, businesses and professionals. Target audience classification is advertising that is directed at consumers or businesses, which can either be, business-to-consumer advertising or business-to-business advertising (Etzel et al, 2007). Majority of consumer advertising appear in mass media- television(TV), radio, newspapers and magazines and directed at consumers-people who buy the product for their own or someone's else personal use. On the other hand, business advertising tends to be concentrated on specialized business publications or professional journals, in direct mails sent to businesses or in trade shows.

Advertising can also be classified on the basis of the sponsor's objectives/purpose .Some adverts promote a good, service or ideas. Some are meant to generate profits for the advertiser, some are sponsored by non-profit groups, and some try to spur the target audience to action, while others create awareness or understanding of the advertiser's good or service (Arens, 2006)

It can also be classified according to the medium used –print or broadcast. Print media advertising includes advertising in newspapers, magazines, brochures and banners while broadcast or electronic include radio, TV, internet, cinema and so on. Geographic area can also be used to classify advertising; this can either be local, national, regional or international. Local advertising involves advertising within vicinity for example Nairobi city targeted at the consumers within the area, this is so for products which are used specifically within that locality. National advertising is done in the whole nation and such media as newspapers, national radio and Television are used. Regional advertising is advertising that is undertaken within a specific region for example East Africa. International advertising include advertising in the whole world. This is the advertising done by most Multi-national Corporation; they must develop a message that is acceptable universally.

Etzel et al (2007) in addition classified advertising into two; Product versus institutional advertising or by the type of demand. Advertising by the type of demand can either be primary or selective demand. Primary demand advertising is designed to stimulate demand for a generic category of a product. It is used in either of the two situations, the first is when the product is in the introductory stage of its life cycle, and this is referred to as pioneering

advertising. The objective of pioneering advertising at this level is to inform the target market about the product. The other use of primary demand advertising occurs throughout the product life cycle and therefore is considered demand advertising. Selective demand advertising is essentially competitive advertising; it is intended to stimulate demand for individual brands. It pits one brand against the rest of the brands in the market. This type of advertising is employed when a product is beyond the introductory life cycle stage and is competing for a market share with other brands.

Etzel et al (2007), further adds that product advertising focuses on a particular product or brand. It can either be direct-action or indirect action. Direct action advertising seeks a quick response, while an indirect- action advertising is designed to stimulate demand over a long period of time. Institutional advertising on the other hand, presents information about the advertisers business and tries to create a favorable attribute (that is, build goodwill) and is not intended to sell a particular product.

2.8 Advertising Campaigns

Etzel et al (2007), defines an advertising campaign as, consisting of all the tasks involved in transforming a theme into a coordinated advertising program to accomplish a specific goal for a product or brand. Typically a campaign involves several different advertising messages presented over an extended period of time, using a variety of media. It is planned within the framework of the overall marketing plan and as part of a broader promotional program. It is a series of advertisement messages that share a single idea and theme which make up an integrated marketing communication (IMC). Advertising campaigns appear in different media across a specific time frame.

Smith et al(2006) notes that advertising campaign planning process incorporates an analysis of the current situation (research) and a clear definition of the overall communication objectives ,as well as the specific advertising objectives. The critical part of making an advertising campaign is determining a campaign theme, as it sets the tone for the individual advertisements and other forms of marketing communications that will be used. The campaign theme is the central message that will be communicated in the promotional activities. The campaign themes are usually developed with the intention of being used for a substantial period but many of them are short lived due to factors such as being ineffective or market conditions and/or competition in the marketplace.

2.9 Advertising Evaluation

Kibera et al (1988), notes, with the kind of money spent n advertising; top executives want proof that advertising is worthwhile. Yet advertisers promise only that a certain number, of people will be exposed to advertising. Arens et al (2006) contends advertising is often the largest single cost in a company's marketing budget. Good planning and control of advertising depend critically on measures of advertising effectiveness. No wonder its effectiveness is a major concern! Companies can't stop advertising, nor do they want to. But they do want to know what they are getting for their money-and if their advertising is working.

Advertising does not guarantee a certain level of sales and in most instances, would even find it impossible to indicate the portion of sales that are attributable to advertising. This is because of the different objectives, effects over time and measurement problems. In spite of

these problems, advertisers try to measure advertising effectiveness. Hence after showcasing the advertising campaign, companies have to evaluate the effectiveness of its advertising.

According to Etzel et al (2007), an advert's effectiveness may be tested before it is presented to the target audience, or while it is being presented, or after it has completed its run. Testing is the primary tool advertisers use to ensure their advertising dollars are being spent wisely. It can prevent costly errors-especially when judging which advertising strategy or medium is most effective. Advertising research is one kind of marketing research to determine the effectiveness of its advertising. Methods used to measure it are either direct or indirect. Direct tests, are those methods which compile the responses to an advert or campaign. This can only be used with few types of advertising. The direct response survey is one of the most accurate means of measuring the effectiveness of a company's advertising for the simple reason that it measures actual responses to a business' advertisements. Indirect tests measure something other than the actual behavior. These include recall tests which are based on the premise that an advert can have an effect only if it is perceived and remembered. Recall tests include; recognition, showing people an advert and asking if they have seen it before, aided recall- asking people if they can recall seeing a particular brand, and unaided recall –asking people if they can remember seeing an identified product category. The other tests include laboratory test markets and computer simulations. However the complexity of decision making, combined with the multitude on influences on the consumer, will continue to make measuring the effectiveness of advertising difficult tasks.

2.10 Use of Advertising Agency

There are three ways a firm can manage its advertising; develop an internal advertising department, use an outside advertising agency or use a combination of both (Etzel et al (2007). Kotler et al (2000), defines an advertising agency as, a marketing services firm that assists companies in planning, preparing, implementing, and evaluating all or portions of their advertising programs.

According to Bovee et al (1995), advertising agencies are independent organizations that specialize in developing and implementing advertising on behalf of advertisers. Few advertisers can afford to keep many specialists advertising staff, so hiring an independent advertising agency is a cost-effective way to professionals who can enhance the advertiser's knowledge and experience. He further notes that, because of their resources and expertise, agencies are useful when a business is planning a broad advertising campaign that will require a large amount of resources. An advertising agency can also help track and analyze the effectiveness of the advertising. In addition it can, handle overall marketing and branding strategies and sales promotions for its clients. An advertising agency or ad agency is a service business dedicated to creating, planning and handling advertising (and sometimes other forms of promotion) for its clients. An advertising agency is independent from the client and provides an outside point of view to the effort of selling the client's products or services (Wikipedia, August, 2010).

Arens et al (2006) uses the definition of American Advertising Association (AAA) to define an agency as an independent organization of creative people and business people who specialize in developing and preparing advertising plans, advertisements and other

promotional tools. The agency purchases advert space and time in various media on behalf of different advertisers, clients or sellers to find customers of goods and services. He further adds that this definition offers clues as to why many advertisers hire advertising agencies. First, agencies are independent; they are not owned by the advertiser, the media or the suppliers. So they bring an outside objective viewpoint to the advertisers business –a state an advertiser can never attain. The agency provides another service by arranging and contracting for broadcast time and magazine or newspaper space and because to its media experience, the agency saves the client time and money .And finally agencies have the savvy, skill and competence to serve the needs of a variety of clients because of their daily exposure to a broad spectrum of marketing situations and problems.

According to AAA, an agency's purpose is to interpret to the public, or to desired segments of the public, information about a legally marketed product or service. The agency does this by first studying the client's product to determine its strengths and weaknesses .Then analyses the product's present and potential marketing, and uses the knowledge of its distribution channels, sales and available media to formulate a plan to carry out the advertiser's message. Agencies can be classified by the range of services they offer and the type of business they handle. The two basic types are full service agency and specialized service agency. The main reason why agencies are used is that they provide the client with the services of highly skilled individuals who are specialists in their own fields.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter covered the research design, the population of the study, sampling design, data collection method and data analysis techniques used in the study.

3.2: Research Design

This was a descriptive survey intended to establish the perception of KPLC's domestic customers in Nairobi towards the company's advertising strategy. According to Donald and Pamela (1998), a study concerned with the finding out of who, what, which and how of a phenomenon is referred to as descriptive design. A similar study has been used by Chemayiek (2005).

3.3: The Population

The population of interest in the study was consisting of all domestic customers of KPLC in Nairobi. Domestic Consumers (DC) are those customers that are metered by the Company at 240V or 415V and whose consumption does not exceed 15,000 Units per any Billing Period. They include consumers who use electricity in their homes for cooking, heating and lighting.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Design

A sample of 120 domestic electricity consumers was included in the study; both convenient and purposive sampling was used to select the respondents. Convenient sampling was used to select the respondents to select respondents as they walked in pay their bills. Purposive sampling was used by direct emailing of questionnaire to some respondents.

3.6 Data Collection Method

Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. The respondents were domestic customers of the company in Nairobi. The questionnaires were designed based on the research paper questions in the study. It was divided into three sections; Section A contained the general information on respondents. In section B awareness of changes was tested using the dichotomous questions where respondents answered either 'YES' or 'NO'. Respondents were also requested to indicate the source of awareness of the change where options were provided and they were required to tick as appropriate. Section C used Likert scale to determine the perception of respondents on such attributes identified in the literature. The data was collected from the different KPLC pay point offices, Karen/Dagoretti, Adams Arcade, Electricity House, Stimaplaza and Ruaraka. Questionnaires were also e-mailed to some respondents. Majority of the questionnaires (40%) were placed at the Electricity House because this is the most centrally located office and is based at the city centre. The rest were distributed equally in the other offices.

3.7 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to summarize and analyze the data. Section A of the questionnaire was analyzed using frequency distribution and percentages. Section B and C was analyzed using mean score and standard deviation to determine the extent of awareness of the changes by the respondent and their perception towards the adverts.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the data collected. It provides information about a summary of the general information, the extent of customer awareness of the KPLC's Advertisements and customer perception on Kenya Power and Lighting Company's advertising strategies. The response rate was 87 % (84) was achieved from the total target of 120 questionnaires. Summaries of the data findings together with possible interpretations have been presented using percentages, frequencies, mean scores and standard deviations.

4.2 General Information

A total of 104 completed and useable interview guides were obtained from the respondents for the survey. The general information considered in this study was; gender, marital status and level of education of the respondents and income level.

4.2.1: Gender of the respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The results are shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Gender of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	65	62.2	62.2
Female	39	37.8	100.0
Total	104	100.0	50.0

As shown in table 4.1, most of the respondents (66.7%) were male while the remaining 33.3% were female.

4.2.2: Marital status

The respondents were asked to state their marital status. The results are shown in table.

Table 4.2: Marital status

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Married	64	61.1	61.1
Single	40	38.9	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0

As shown in table 4.2, majority of the respondents (61.1%) were married and 38.9% were single

4.2.3: Level of education of the respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education. The results are shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Level of education of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Post graduate	57	54.4	54.4
Diploma graduate	21	20.0	74.4
Professional	27	25.6	100.0
Total	104	100.0	

As shown in table 4.3, majority of the respondents (54.4%) had post graduate qualification, 25.6% had professional qualifications while 20.0% were diploma graduates. This shows that all the respondents had either college or university education.

4.2.4: Age of the respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their age. The results are shown in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Age of the respondents

Age bracket	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-24 years	12	11.1	11.1
25-29 years	21	20.0	33.1
30-34 years	36	34.4	65.6
34-39 years	24	23.3	88.9
40-50 years	11	11.1	100.0
Total	104	100.0	

The findings presented in table 4.4 show that, 34.4% of the respondents were of age bracket 30-34, 23.3% were of age bracket 34-39 years, and 20% were of age bracket 25-29 years while 11.1% were of age brackets 20-24 years and 40-50 years each. On average the majority of the respondents are between the age brackets of 25 -39 years.

4.2.5: Level of income of the respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their levels of income. The results are shown in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Level of income of the respondents

Income bracket	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 25,000	2	2.2	2.2
26,000-50,000	33	32.2	34.4
50,000-100,000	49	46.7	81.1
Above 100,000	20	18.9	100.0
Total	104	100.0	

As shown in table 4.5, 46.7% of the respondents had income that lies between Kshs 50,000-100,000, 32.2% had an income that lies between Kshs 26,000 - 50,000.00 and 18.9% incomes above Kshs 100,000, while 2.2% had income that is below Kshs 25,000.

4. 3: Consumers' Awareness of KPLC Advertisements

This section looked at the awareness first if KPLC advertises and secondly on the awareness of KPLC advertisements and their sources of awareness. This was tested using a dichotomous question where respondents were to answer yes or no, and indicate the sources of awareness by ticking the appropriate answer. The section also sought to find out the benefits of advertising ad respondents were asked to tick the appropriate answer(s).

4. 3.1: Awareness of KPLC's participation in promotional activities

The respondents were asked to state whether they were aware of KPLC's participation in any promotional activity. The results are shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.6: Awareness of KPLC’s participation in promotional activities

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	104	100.0	100.0

The respondents unanimously agreed that they were aware of KPLC’s participation in promotional activities. Specifically the respondents were aware of advertising (65.5%) and public relations. Amongst the advertising activities carried out by KPLC, the respondent indicated that they were more aware of the following; Mulika mwizi (40.5%), Badilisha bulb (20.2%), Easy pay(23.8%) and Stima loan (17.9%).

4.3.2: Source of awareness

The respondents were asked to indicate their source of your awareness. The results are shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.7: Source of awareness

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Radio	41	39.3	39.3
Television	28	27.4	66.7
Billboards	10	9.5	76.2
Newspaper	9	8.3	84.5
Magazines	5	4.8	89.3
Banners and brochures	5	4.8	94.0
Company vehicle	6	6.0	100.0
Total	104	100.0	

The result in table 4.7 shows that the key sources of awareness were radio at 39.3%, followed by television at 27.4%, billboards at 9.5% and newspaper at 8.3%

4.3.3: KPLC’s adverts with great impact on the promotion of the company products

The respondents were asked to identify KPLC adverts which they felt had a greater impact on the promotion of the company products. The results are shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.8: KPLC’s adverts with greater impact on the promotion of the company

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mulika mwizi	68	65.5	65.5
Badilisha bulb	11	10.7	76.2
Stima loan	10	9.5	85.7
Umeme pamoja	2	2.4	88.1
Easy pay	12	11.9	100.0
Total	104	100.0	

As shown in table 4.3, Mulika mwizi (65.5%) had the greatest impact on the promotion of KPLC products and services, followed by Easy pay (11.9%) and Badilisha bulb (10.7%).

4.2.4: Benefits of Advertising.

The respondents were asked to state the benefits of advertising from a list provided. The respondents unanimously identified the following as the key benefits derived from advertising; advertising helps consumers to be aware of different brands available in the

market, It informs the consumer about qualities and price of goods and this makes purchasing easy for consumers, differentiate from rivals- companies use advertising to tell people about the distinct products they offer, increase market share of a particular product of a company, reassure customers of the quality of the product-makes customer feel more confident, consumers are attracted by the quality of the products that are advertised and advertising helps address societal challenges such as promote energy saving.

4.4 Perception of Respondents on KPLC's Advertising Strategy

The respondents were asked to rate the statements regarding advertising KPLC's Products in a five point Likert scale. The range was 'to a very great extent (5)' to 'not at all' (1). The scores of 'not at all' and 'to a little extent' have been taken to present a variable which had an impact to a small extent (S.E) (equivalent to mean score of 0 to 2.5 on the continuous Likert scale ;($0 \leq S.E < 2.4$). The scores of 'to a moderate extent' have been taken to represent a variable that had an impact to a moderate extent (M.E.) (equivalent to a mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 on the continuous Likert scale: $2.5 \leq M.E. < 3.4$). The score of both 'to a great extent' and 'to a very great extent' have been taken to represent a variable which had an impact to a large extent (L.E.) (equivalent to a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0 on a continuous Likert scale; $3.5 \leq L.E. < 5.0$). A standard deviation of >1.5 implies a significant difference on the impact of the variable among respondents.

Table 4.9: Ranking of the statements regarding advertising of KPLC Products

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Advertising helps consumers to be aware of different brands available in the market and informs the consumer about qualities and price of goods hence making purchasing easy	1.0238	.15337
Differentiate from rivals-companies use advertising to tell people about the distinct product they offer	1.5714	.49784
Persuades customers to buy or use a particular product or service	1.4048	.49379
Advertising is a source of information about products, social roles and lifestyle imaginary	1.5357	.50172
Reminds customers of the existence of a product or service	1.4643	.50172
Increase market share of a particular product or company	1.4405	.49943
Advertising is essential to the prosperity of my country's economy, plays a key role in dynamic economy ,creates jobs, pay more tax and funds diverse media	1.5595	.49943
Promotes consumer choice-it helps consumers exercise their right to choose	1.6190	.48854
Change peoples' attitudes an effective advertisement results in a swift change in the attitudes and habits of the people	1.5476	.50072
Advertising entertains	1.4524	.50072

Reassure customers of quality of the product	1.4524	.50072
Advertising helps address societal challenges such as promote energy saving	1.5833	.49597
KPLC is now advertising more than before	3.9048	1.01339
KPLC adverts are well presented and is a representation of professionalism	3.0357	.79829
Advertising makes us aware of the products of KPLC	4.1071	.83620
Advertising supports company activities such as anti vandalism, energy saving	4.1548	.95051
KPLC TV adverts are very captivating	3.3333	.89622
KPLC adverts on the bill are eye catching	2.9881	.88487
KPLC advertising informs us of the new product introduced by the company	3.5952	.93292
The use of different languages in radio adverts by KPLC ensures that the message reaches its diverse audience	4.1429	.86627
Use of humor in some adverts make advertising by KPLC entertaining	4.2143	.72927
Advertising through various media makes KPLC 's adverts have more impact	3.9762	.84989
KPLC adverts are misleading since they do not offer what they promise to offer	2.0000	1.23210
There is no need for KPLC to advertise since everyone wants electricity and therefore it sells itself	1.4881	.81395

KPLC adverts are a waste of company resources since the company is a monopoly and the product sells itself	1.3571	.67024
KPLC adverts cause confusion; products do not perform as well as advertising claims	1.5833	.80971

The study found that the following statements were used to a large extent (high mean values) to reflect the advertising of KPLC products; Advertising makes us aware of the products of KPLC (mean of 4.1071), Advertising supports company activities such as anti vandalism, energy saving (mean of 4.1548), The use of different languages in radio adverts by KPLC ensures that the message reaches its diverse audience (mean of 4.1429), Use of humor in some adverts make advertising by KPLC entertaining (mean of 4.2143), Advertising through various media makes KPLC 's adverts have more impact (mean of 3.9762), KPLC advertising informs us of the new product introduced by the company (mean of 3.5952) and KPLC is now advertising more than before (mean of 3.9048).

The study also found that some of the statements are only used to a small extent to for instance; KPLC adverts are a waste of company resources since the company is a monopoly and the product sells itself (mean of 1.3571) and There is no need for KPLC to advertise since everyone wants electricity and therefore it sells itself (mean of 1.4881).

CHAPTER FIVE:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The objectives of the study were to establish the extent of customer awareness of the KPLC's advertisements and to determine customer perception on Kenya Power and Lighting Company's advertising strategies. Having concluded analysis of the data, discussion, conclusion and recommendations are presented in this section.

5.2 Discussion

Although KPLC is perceived to be a monopoly given the kind of products they offer, pressure from indirect competition and government as well as other stakeholders have made KPLC adapt to modern marketing strategies. One of KPLC's strategies includes advertising strategy. Lately KPLC adverts can be seen/ heard in almost all corners of the country including the internet. KPLC undertakes both product as well as institutional advertising. KPLC advertises in the print media; newspapers and magazines, in the internet; its website, bill boards, building walls, bus stop shades, the company vehicles, Public Service Vehicles, television, radio, brochures, banners, posters, calendars, T-shirts and other promotional materials. To reach the masses, the company uses road shows. KPLC'S products that have been advertised include Umeme Pamoja, Easypay, E-Bill, StimaLoan, Mulika Mwizi, StimaFlow and Badilisha Bulb.

In summary, the findings indicate that there is a high level of awareness; this is because the respondents acknowledge having seen or heard KPLC adverts. Most of the respondents acknowledge that KPLC advertises now more than before. Generally, the results indicate that it is known that KPLC advertises but when it comes to individual adverts, only Mulika Mwizi, Easypay and Badilisha Bulbs are most recognized. However, there is also a concern because some of the product adverts are not known such as E-bill and Mulika Mwizi. The company advertising involved a campaign that used diverse media such as radio advertising, Television advertising, road shows, branding of public vehicle (Citi hoppa), company vehicles, brochures, wall branding throughout the country as well as bus stop shades. The Television adverts employed use of humor and a local TV actor.

The respondents unanimously agreed that the key benefits derived from advertising were as follows; advertising helps consumers to be aware of different brands available in the market, it informs the consumer about qualities and price of goods and this makes purchasing easy for consumers, differentiates from rivals- companies use advertising to tell people about the distinct products they offer, increase market share of a particular product of a company, reassure customers of the quality of the product-makes customers feel more confident. consumers are attracted by the quality of the products that are advertised and advertising helps address societal challenges such as promote energy saving. From the findings most respondents interviewed are either college or university graduates and therefore able to appreciate the benefits that are derived from advertising.

On the general perception about advertising strategy by KPLC, it was noted that specific statements which have a great influence on the advertising of KPLC products were; Advertising makes us aware of the products of KPLC, Advertising supports company activities such as anti vandalism, energy saving, The use of different languages in radio adverts by KPLC ensures that the message reaches its diverse audience, Use of humor in some adverts make advertising by KPLC entertaining, Advertising through various media makes KPLC 's adverts have more impact, KPLC advertising informs us of the new product introduced by the company and KPLC is now advertising more than before.

It is worth noting that as much as all the respondents are aware of KPLC advertising, specific adverts are not recognized yet they have been there for long such E-bill and Umeme Pamoja. All KPLC advertising campaigns involve the use of TV, radio(different radio stations), T-shirts, caps, umbrellas, key rings ,pens, arm bands among other promotional materials. This can be explained by Shiffman et al (1994), that perception is largely selective in nature and consumers exercise a great deal of selectivity as to which aspects of the environment –stimuli they perceive. He further adds that perception depends not only on the physical stimuli but also on the stimuli's relation to the surrounding field and on conditions within the individual.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that customers appreciate Kenya Power and Lighting Company's advertising strategies. This is supported by the respondent's identification with the key advertising promotions carried out by KPLC. More so majority of the respondents indicated that they were happy with the distribution of free energy savings bulbs carried out the KPLC during the year.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that KPLC should communicate to customers the effect of different factors on the cost of electricity to ensure customers do not feel overcharged; KPLC should speed up the process of connecting customers once they sign up for the service, hasten the installation of prepaid meters so that disparities in bills can be sorted out, embrace testimonial advertising and use celebrities in advertising.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out using semi-structured questionnaires. Advertising research may require customers to be prompted to recall an advert. This therefore did not provide an opportunity to clarify questions, verify that questions are understood. Some adverts may be known to the respondents but are not able to remember them unless prodded for recall.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study focused on the KPLC's advertising strategy as one of the strategies adapted by the company. KPLC also participates in other promotional activities such as Public Relations activities, corporate sponsorship of events such as golf, football. It would be interesting to know whether these activities are also meeting its objectives.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Introduction Letter

Christine C. Tiriongo
School of Business
C/O MBA office
University Of Nairobi
P.O Box 30197
Nairobi.
October, 2010

Dear respondent,

RE: Collection of Survey Data

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi, school of business. In order to fulfill the degree requirement, I am undertaking a management research project to determine the **Perception on Kenya Power Lighting Company's (KPLC) Advertising Strategy by Domestic Consumer in Nairobi.**

This is to kindly request you to assist me collect the data by filling out the accompanying questionnaire. The information you provide will be used exclusively for academic purposes. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated. This will not take more than ten minutes of your time.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Christine Tiriongo

MBA Student

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire

SECTION A- DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Gender Male Female

2. Marital status Married Single Divorced
 Widowed Separated

3. Level of Education Post graduate Diploma graduate
 Professional Other

4. Age bracket (years) 20 – 24 25-29
 30- 34 34-39
 40- 50 Above 50

5. Gross Income bracket Below 25,000 26,000-50,000
 50,000-100,000 Above 100,000

6. Where do you reside in Nairobi? Name the estate

SECTION B

Level of awareness of KPLC’s Advertisements.

1. Are you aware if KPLC participates in any promotional activity?
 Yes No

2. If yes, which ones are you aware of?
 - Advertising
 - Public relations
 - Road shows
 - Corporate Social Responsibility
 - Other (Specify).....

3. If are you aware of the advertising activities above, which of the adverts are you aware of?

Mulika mwizi <input type="checkbox"/>	Badilisha Bulb <input type="checkbox"/>
Stimaloan <input type="checkbox"/>	Umeme Pamoja <input type="checkbox"/>
Easy pay <input type="checkbox"/>	E-bill <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify).....	

4. What is the source of your awareness?
 - Radio
 - Television

- Website []
- Internet []
 - Billboards []
 - Newspapers []
 - Magazines []
 - Banners and brochures []
- Company vehicles []
- Other (Specify).....

5. Which of the following KPLC adverts do you think has had a greater impact on the promotion of the company products, and why?

- Mulika mwizi []
- Badilisha Bulb []
- Stimaloan []
- Umeme Pamoja []
- Easy pay [].....
- E-bill []
- Other (Specify).....

6. In your own opinion, what do you think are the **benefits** of advertising?

(You can tick more than one objective)

Benefit	
Advertising helps consumers to be aware of different brands available in the market. It informs the consumer about qualities and price of goods and this makes purchasing easy for the consumers	[]
Differentiate from rivals - Companies use advertising to tell people about the distinct products they offer.	[]
Persuades customers to buy or use a particular product or service	[]
Advertising is a source of information about products, social roles and lifestyle imagery	[]
Reminds customers of the existence of a product or service	[]
Increase market share of a particular product or company	[]
Advertising is essential to the prosperity of my country's economy. Advertising plays a key role in a dynamic economy; it creates jobs, pays more tax and funds diverse media.	[]
Promotes consumer choice-it helps consumers exercise their right to choose	[]
Changes peoples' attitudes -an effective advertisement results in a swift change in the attitudes and habits of the people.	[]
Advertising entertains	[]
Reassure Customers of the quality of the product-makes customers feel more confident. Consumers are attracted by the quality of the products that are advertised	[]
Advertising helps address societal challenges such as promote energy saving	[]

SECTION C

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement regarding advertising of KPLC products .On a scale of 1-5 where 1 means no extent at all and 5 is to a very large extent.

Factor	1	2	3	4	5
KPLC is now advertising more than before					
KPLC adverts are well presented and is a representation of professionalism					
Advertising makes us aware of the products of KPLC					
Advertising supports company activities such as anti vandalism, energy saving etc					
KPLC TV adverts are very captivating					
KPLC ads on the bill boards are eye catching					
KPLC Advertising informs us of the new products introduced by the company					
The use of different languages in radio advertisement by KPLC ensures that, the message reaches its diverse audience.					
Use of humor in some adverts make advertising by KPLC entertaining					
Advertising through various media makes KPLC's ads have more impact					
KPLC adverts are misleading since they do not offer what they promise to offer					
There is no need for KPLC to advertise since everyone wants electricity and therefore it sells itself					
KPLC adverts are a waste of company resources since the company is a monopoly and the product sells itself					
KPLC adverts causes confusion; products do not perform as well as advertising claims					

Lastly, what recommendations would you give to KPLC, on promotion of company products and where do you think they should improve?

APPENDIX 3: Adverts

