

Effect of Stakeholders Initiatives on Sustainable Tourism Development in MT Elgon Region, Kenya

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Abstract: Sustainability has become an important concept in relation to tourism planning and development. Stakeholder theory and Participatory and Empowerment model were used to underpin the study. Therefore the purpose of the study was to determine the effect stakeholders' initiatives on sustainable tourism development in Mt Elgon region. The specific objectives were environmental conservation practices. Explanatory research design was adopted, employing cross sectional survey with the use of questionnaires for household's heads and interview schedule guide for KWS staff. Target population was the 3192 households and 5 Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) management staff in Mt Elgon National Park. Sample size was 210 households and 2 KWS staff and purposive and random sampling technique was employed respectively. The validity and reliability of the instruments was done through consultation of experts and cronbach alpha coefficient calculated at 0.70 respectively. Pilot study was done in Isukha Central, Shinyalu, in Kakamega County. Using SPSS, descriptive statistics for mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics for Pearson product moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient and regression analysis were used for data analysis. Research findings revealed that environmental conservation practices ($\beta_2 = 0.186, p=0.007 < 0.05$) had a significant effect on sustainable tourism development. The study recommended that the government should develop a clear policy that could guide environment conservation for sustainable development.

Keywords: Environmental Conservation, sustainable tourism development

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Introduction

International tourism is a trillion dollar business, accounting for up 9% of global Gross Domestic Profit (GDP). The world tourism organization (WTO) estimates that tourism is expected to continue to grow by 3.3% annually through 2030 and 900 million arrivals per year around the world, generating in one in every twelve jobs (WTO, 2014). Tourism plays significant roles in economic transformation of many nations such as Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Australia, United States of America, Emirate of Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Aruba, and South Korea and notably this countries have unique natural attraction, appropriate tourism policy, environmental best practices and unique

created attraction like amuse park monument, museum, art galleries, sports (Croes, 2006, Wilde and Cox, 2008; Elliot and Mann, 2005).

Apparently tourism like any other sector faces major global challenges, notably the doubling of international tourist movement predicted for the next 15 to 20 years will bring considerable pressures if not serious harm on very resources in protected areas like national parks and reserves on which tourism depends. The growth need be managed well; this will require careful planning of the location and types of new development improved and adaption of sustainable environmental management practices and sustainable consumption (WTO, 2014).

The nature and significance of international tourism in Africa is clearly affected by the wider nature of economic development based on endowed resources example, Kenya, Mauritius ,Seychelles, morocco ,Tunisia, south Africa and Zimbabwe are well established and recognized as tourism destination globally but facing challenges in enhancing sustainable tourism development for example in Zimbabwe, the government decided that land resettlement of local people was a more important objective than wildlife conservation and in the last few years most wildlife tourism ceased to be viable (Ikaira, 2001).

A similar scenario is illustrated in Nigeria, Nigeria as a nation is endowed with both natural and material resources that can be harnessed to aid economic transformation of the country by providing revenue and foreign exchange. Thus, tourism has been discovered to be a very important instrument to poverty alleviation, attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development (Olapade, 2012, Olajide and Nwogu, 2012). In spite of the various tourism resources available in Nigeria, there is still the lack of infrastructure and many destinations lack the ambience found in developed tourist destinations (Olapade, 2012). It is important to note that Kenya is host to a myriad of rural visual resources, a product of an intricate mix of geological processes, soil characteristics, climatic conditions and human activities (Akama, 2000).

Environmental conservation practices

Most experts seem to agree that sustainable tourism development has become a strategic goal for world-class destinations. Major destinations are seeking preservation for future generations and exploring sustainable development strategies and techniques. The literature also seems to support the suggestion that environmentally sustainable destinations can positively affect tourism performance (UNDP, 2005). UNDP further indicated that tourists exhibit increasing environmental conscientiousness when shopping for tourist destinations. Governments are now seeking sustainable tourism development since it is critical to the conservation of the natural environment .Sustainable tourism can also help improving the image of a particular destination.

Shamwari game reserve founded in 1992 in Eastern Cape, the reserve has been a showcase project of conservation and tourism in synergy. When the reserve was first founded, it started with only 7 members, their goal was to make conservation profitable, so the concept and the reserve can sustain into the future the area of the reserve is unique because it contains the five converging ecological bio-systems (Mabulla, 2000).This unique natural feature combined with sufficient summer and winter rainfalls fosters an unequalled diversity of wildlife. In its effort to create harmony between wildlife and natural environment, The Shamwari Game Reserve takes a systematic and scientific approach to ensure that re-stocking procedures are gradually and strictly followed so no resources would be over-stressed.

Shamwari wildlife department established in 1996, Pioneered ecotourism in Eastern Cape region of South Africa and led resurgence of other tourism programs, ensuring that the integrity of wildlife and biodiversity is maintained within the rich ecosystems of the Shamwari reserve. And more notably promoted nature conservationists to maintain the sustainability of all environments within the reserve and the quality of the wildlife experience (WTO, 2006, Lubbe, 2005).

Another success story in tourism sustainability in Zambia's South Luangwa National Park, a world-renowned wildlife haven, is at the southern most of three national parks in the valley of the Luangwa River under the management of Bush camp Company. The primary concern of The Bush camp Company's commitment to the wildlife and people of the South Luangwa are environmental conservation and sustainable income generation, through partnering closely and effectively with both the local community and conservation NGOs.

By adapting environmental best practice, introducing solar technology throughout the Bush camps and Mfuwe Lodge for the heating system, lighting, charging, fridge-freezers, and water pumping, using sustainably sourced timber, and setting up tree planting programmes and implementing Green waste management system to ensure minimized environmental impact. The Bush camp Company's persistent efforts and contribution towards responsible tourism through last decade have not only strengthened the local community and safeguarded the natural heritage in Luangwa Valley, but also have set a successful business model in Zambia .By placing education and community enrichment as primary concerns, working together with the local conservation organizations, its various efforts have not gone without reward (Lubbe, 2005).

A recent critical study by Laudati (2010) exposed the complexity of issues that emanate from the intersection of well-meaning conservation, tourism, and rural poverty alleviation in Buhoma, a village adjacent to Bwindii impenetrable national park in Uganda, and a main gorilla tracking entry point. This has posed a challenge on sustainable tourism development in the region. In Kenya environmental threats exist in national parks and game reserves particularly poaching. Further, Kenyans often engage in activity in and around tourist attractions that fails to sustain the wildlife of the region. In addition, the increasing population in the region has led to human encroachment into wildlife habitats such as forests and grasslands.

This has led to human-wildlife conflicts resulting in the migration of some animal species to other areas. Given these challenges, it is important to for each county to pursue strategies aimed at revamping the sector to gearing towards sustainable tourism development (Ole Siptiek, 2013).

The term environment refers to the physical environment that includes natural and manmade components. In a broader sense, social and cultural environments are also considered (Ross and Hall, 1996a) the study will focus on the physical environment. Environmental quality refers to the quality of the natural features of the destination that can be deteriorated by human activities. Natural features like beautiful scenery, natural hydrologic structures, clean water, fresh air and species diversity can suffer from pollution and therefore lose their attractiveness.

According to Richie *et al.*, (2003) environmental quality is an integral part of the quality of the natural attractions. Accordingly, maintaining a high level of overall environmental quality

is important for the competitiveness of most types of tourism destinations and Environmental sustainability is the maintenance of the factors and practices that contribute to the quality of the environment on a long-term basis. The measurement of this factor emphasizes the overall viability and health of living systems in their different and comprehensive dimensions. Further, environmental management is categorized into four groups: management by codes of conduct, by self-developed environmental practice, by certified or awarded best practice and by accreditation scheme (Lubbe, 2005).

The adoption of codes of conduct helps to raise the level of understanding the tourism and environment interactions, increase environmental awareness of all stakeholders and also helps to create political support for environmental activities. In many cases, creating or ratifying such a code is an excellent first step in creating environmental consensus in the destination.

However, for destination managers, environmental accreditation schemes are much more operative if they offer criteria for managerial acting and a well-known (marketing) logo. Well-known logo is a good base for destination environmental image management by green branding. It helps to create proper environmental image of a destination and thus can be a powerful tool in increasing the competitiveness of the destination (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003).

Managerial efforts to minimize the environmental impacts and manage environmental quality can also be carried out with the help of environmental codes of conduct, environmental programs and awards and effort to fulfill the criteria for their adoption. Codes of conduct can increase the destination willingness to preserve the environment, but are not as useful for the managerial acting. Awarded accreditation schemes, such as Blue Flag can create the willingness framework and support the actions to preserve the environment and are much more useful for destination managers. (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003). Kenya ranks high in terms of biodiversity. It is considered one of the world's mega diverse countries with a valued wildlife heritage similar to that of Brazil, Indonesia, Congo, Madagascar, Tanzania and South Africa. Kenya's wildlife heritage includes approximately 21,575 insects, 1,133 birds, 314 mammals, 191 reptiles, 180 freshwater fish, 692 marine and brackish fish and 88 amphibian species (Ndivo *et al.*, 2012).

According to Mabulla (2000) The Kenyan government collaboration with the local communities in tourist destination and other stakeholder has made significant progress in tourism. In summary tourism not properly planned and managed can leave permanent footprints on the physical, social, cultural and economic environment of destinations. Tourism development can be alienating to local residents, overcrowded, noisy, and architecturally tasteless and place pressure on the infrastructure. Inappropriate types and scales of development may arise due to laissez-faire tourism policies and lack of national, regional and local planning and regulation. Government and stakeholders in the tourism sector has a responsibility to ensure that in the development of tourism long term prosperity and the quality of life of future generations are not placed at risk (Dwyer and Kim, 2003).

Destination attractiveness and its sustainability can be increased by proper management of environmental quality of a destination (Mihalic, 2000; Hassan, 2000). Mihalic further argued that destination sustainability can be enhanced through such practices as codes of conduct, self-developed environmental practice, certified or award-based best practice and accreditation schemes.

Environmental codes of conduct

Environmental Codes of Conduct for Tourism vary greatly in coverage, scope and content, there are national, regional and international industry codes. They address the tourism industry, host communities, visitors or governments and other authorities. For destination managers it is of limited value, because it neither guides environmental action nor suggests its nature. If the code is written by a national or international organization, principles will be wider and more abstract. An example is the WTO codes of conduct The Tourist Code calls for respect of the natural and cultural heritage from the side of the tourists (WTO, 2005). The Tourism Bill of Rights encourages the states that they `should protect the tourism environmental (WTO, 2001f). If the code is written by carriers, tour operators or other parties in tourism, the principles will be adapted to the type and size of business, but will still remain principles of limited value for managerial acting.

They are usually a mixture of strategic policies and general principles with more or less indication of the action should be taken, Codes of conduct normally recognize the importance of the environmental features for tourism and call for environmentally friendly behavior. Adopting an environmental code could be the first step towards committing the organization or tourist destination to environmental responsibility, could contribute significantly to increased environmental awareness, encourage environmental alliances in the tourism industry and destinations and create a framework for political support EcoNET (Awards and Labels, 1998) lists about thirty widely known environmental codes of conduct, the UNEP Industry and Environment (1995) study more than thirty. It could be argued if there are too many. Many of them are rather specific and take into account the specific needs of the author organization, body, association or political alliance (WTO, 2001, UNEP, 2005).

Self-declared environmental practice and certified good practice

The second group of environmental management approaches is self-declared environmental practice. The term in this paper covers uncertified environmental management by different environmental activities and programs that are carried out by tourism organizations and other bodies located at the destination. These activities can be self-developed by an hotelier or carrier or introduced by (local) consultants. If the certificate or label is awarded, it falls into the category of self-declared labels (WTO, 2014).

The tourism industry and destination managers have recognized that unknown and self-developed environmental programs and actions are of limited marketing value in fostering the environmental competitiveness of the destination (Norlida *et al.*, 2011, Hassan, 2000). Jamaican nationally developed environmental management system (EMS) was designed for small hotels that foresee the adoption of the internationally recognized Green Globe certificate for the hotels.

The goal of the EMS is to enhance the environmental image of Jamaican hotels and destinations by an internationally recognized certificate (Mihalic, 1995). The Green Globe environmental award is an example of the internationally recognized environmental certificate for improving environmental practice that currently has over 500 members in 101 countries including hotels, airlines, car hire companies, tour operators, travel agents and tourism boards. (UN, 2002b). While there are many environmental practice models and logos in the tourism and travel industry there is a need for a more systematic approach in order to enable better communication of environmental performance to visitors and other audiences (Stronza, 2009).

Environmental accreditation scheme

Environmental accreditation awards, labels and seals are granted by third parties and based on specified criteria that instruct the destination managers as to which environmental obligations to fulfill. Eco-accreditation schemes usually provide criteria for environmentally friendlier tourism products, hotels, tour operators, travel agents, facility operators, marinas, beaches and tourist (UN, 2002b, Norlida *et al.*, 2011).

Environmental quality

Environmental quality refers to the quality of the natural features of the destination that can be deteriorated by human activities. Natural features like beautiful scenery, natural hydrologic structures, clean water, fresh air and species diversity can suffer from pollution and therefore lose their attractiveness.

According to tourist demand, environmental quality is an integral part of the quality of the natural attractions. Accordingly, maintaining a high level of overall environmental quality is important for the sustainability of most types of tourism destinations (Miller, 2001) and thus a primary concern for destination managers. The quality of natural attractions is a part of quality destination.

Environmental quality can be promoted by enhancing conservation awareness among the locals through public education and extension, workshops, seminars, public rallies and other social meetings will arouse people's awareness about the importance of biodiversity, culture and manmade attractions as tourism resources and the need to conserve them (Croes, 2005, Stronza, 2009, Choi and Sirakaya, 2006). This will also re-awaken the local people's interest and commitment to conserving this invaluable tourism resource for their own benefit (Akama, 2002).

Method

The study used explanatory research design and descriptive research design. Explanatory research design was adopted, employing cross sectional survey with the use of questionnaires and interview schedule guides to key informants. The target population for the research included 3197 households in Mt. Elgon region and 5 senior management KWS staff in Mt Elgon National Park. The respondents for study were Kenya wildlife Service, staff in MENP, and 1535 local community households' heads in Chepyuk ward, and 1662 in Kapsokwony ward (KNSB, 2009, Olubadwa, 2010, KWS, 2015, Bungoma County Fiscal Strategy Paper, 2014; First Bungoma County Integrated Development Plan, 2013). The sample size was arrived at using the following formula: $n = NC^2 \div C^2 + (N-1)e^2$. The questionnaires were administered to local households in Chepyuk and Kapsokwony wards the questionnaire had both open ended and closed ended question.

Discussion

Environmental conservation Practices

The second objective of the study sought to establish the effect of environmental conservation practices on sustainable tourism development. Table 1 illustrates the results.

Table 1. Environmental conservation practices

		SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mapping and Protecting Reserve	Freq	64.00	111.00	18.00	1.00	0.00	1.77	0.63
	%	33.00	57.20	9.30	0.50	0.00		
Prevention of Human Encroachment	Freq	20.00	113.00	39.00	2.00	20.00	2.43	1.05
	%	10.30	58.20	20.10	1.00	10.30		
Support of Environmental Education	Freq	23.00	69.00	44.00	58.00	0.00	2.79	0.98
	%	11.80	35.60	22.70	29.90	0.00		
Enhance Biodiversity	Freq	7.00	51.00	66.00	60.00	10.00	3.08	0.96
	%	3.60	26.30	34.00	30.90	5.20		
Implementation of New Environmental Programmes	Freq	8.00	58.00	56.00	69.00	3.00	3.01	0.94
	%	4.10	29.90	28.90	35.60	1.50		
Alliance with Environmental Companies	Freq	35.00	119.00	23.00	15.00	2.00	2.12	0.83
	%	18.00	61.30	11.90	7.70	1.00		
Waste Management	Freq	28.00	22.00	84.00	60.00	0.00	2.91	1.00
	%	14.40	11.30	43.30	30.90	0.00		
Alliance with Environmentally Aware Destinations	Freq	14.00	31.00	49.00	81.00	19.00	3.31	1.08
	%	7.20	16.00	25.30	41.80	9.80		
Alliances with Universities and Organizations	Freq	32.00	91.00	34.00	36.00	1.00	2.40	0.99
	%	16.50	46.90	17.50	18.60	0.50		
Collaboration with Tourism Industries	Freq	14.00	52.00	48.00	78.00	2.00	3.01	1.00
	%	7.20	26.80	24.70	40.20	1.00		
Establishment of Programs to Monitor Quality of visitors	Freq	17.00	82.00	39.00	52.00	4.00	2.71	1.02
	%	8.80	42.30	20.10	26.80	2.10		
Environmental Conservation							2.67	0.48

Source: Field Data, 2018

Based on the results, 57.2% of the respondents agreed that there is mapping and protecting of the reserve and 33% of the strongly agreed. This is supported by a mean of 1.77 and a standard deviation of 0.63. Besides, 58.2% of the respondents agreed that there is prevention

of human encroachment. 10.3% strongly agreed, 10.3% strongly disagreed while 20.1% were undecided.

The implication is that there is prevention of human conflict. This is corroborated by a mean of 2.43 and a standard deviation of 1.05. Further, 35.6% of the respondents agreed that there is support of environmental education, 11.8% of them strongly agreed, 29.9% disagreed while 22.7% were undecided. The results summed up to a mean of 2.79 and standard deviation of 0.98 suggesting that support of environmental education is minimal. As well, 30.9% of the respondents disagreed that there is enhanced biodiversity conservation, 5.2% strongly disagreed, 26.3% agreed while 34% of them were undecided. The implication is that biodiversity conservation has not been enhanced optimally. The findings conform to a mean of 3.08 and a standard deviation of 0.96.

Further, the implementation of new environmental programmes was also sought by the study. From the findings, 35.6% of the respondents disagreed that there is implementation of new environmental programmes, 29.9% agreed while 28.9% were undecided. The findings were supported by a mean of 3.01 and standard deviation of 0.94.

Evidently, most of the respondents disagreed that there is implementation of new environmental programmes. However, majority (61.3%) of the respondents agreed that there is alliance with environmental companies, 18% strongly agreed, and 7.7% disagreed while 23% were undecided. The implication is that alliances are made with environmental companies. This is confirmed by a mean of 2.12 and a standard deviation of 0.83.

Regarding waste management, 43.3% of respondents were not sure if there is waste management, 30.9% disagreed, 14.4% strongly agreed and 11.3% agreed. The results summed up to a mean of 2.91 and a standard deviation of 1 indicating that there are gaps pertaining waste management.

In addition, 41.8% of the respondents disagreed that there is an alliance with environmentally aware destinations, 9.8% strongly disagreed, 16% agreed while 25.3% were undecided. The mean of 3.31 and standard deviation of 1.08 confirmed that instances of alliance with environmentally aware destinations are low.

Moreover, 46.9% of the respondents agreed that there are alliances with universities and organizations, 16.5% of them strongly agreed, 18.6% disagreed while 17.5% were undecided. The results realized a mean of 2.40 and standard deviation of 0.99. Undoubtedly, there are alliances with universities and organizations. Collaboration with tourism industries is also low as evidenced by 40.2% of the respondents who disagreed and 24.7% who were undecided. On the other hand, 26.8% of them agreed and 7.2% of them strongly agreed.

The resulting mean for the item was 3.01 and standard deviation 1 meaning that collaboration with tourism industries is low. Finally, 42.3% of them agreed that programs have been established to monitor quality of visitors, 8.8% strongly agreed, 26.8% disagreed while 20.1% were undecided. Overall, the establishment of programs to monitor quality of visitors has been lowly evidenced and this is confirmed by a mean of 2.71 and standard deviation of 1.02.

The interviewees were asked to tell how environmental conservation practices affect sustainable tourism development in Mt Elgon region. Below were their responses

“.....sustainable tourism development is more of a strategic goal for world-class destinations. It is a situation where major destinations are seeking preservation of tourism products for future generations hence, exploring sustainable development strategies and techniques of achieving these goals. Practically in the region, sustainable development is based on environmental best practices that includes, wild life species conservation, anti-poaching measures, measures towards minimizing human-wildlife conflict.....KWS Research Warden

Inferential Statistics
Test of Hypotheses

Table 2. Coefficients of Estimate

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	0.208	0.126		1.646	0.101
Environmental conservation practices	0.172	0.063	0.186	2.716	0.007
a Dependent Variable: Sustainable Tourism Development					

Source: Field Data, 2018

Hypothesis: Stated that environmental conservation practices had no significant effect on sustainable tourism development.

Findings showed that environmental conservation practices had coefficients of estimate which was significant basing on $\beta_2 = 0.186$ ($p\text{-value} = 0.007$ which was $p < 0.05$ hence the null hypothesis rejected, and the alternative hypothesis accepted, therefore, there was a significant effect between environmental conservation practices and sustainable tourism development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that conclude that environmental conservation practices had positive and significant effect on sustainable tourism development. Environmental conservation indicated that there was mapping and protection of the reserve.

There is also prevention of human encroachment though the support of environmental education is minimal. The government should create a clear policy framework that should provide an environment that enables and encourages the private sector, local community, tourists and other stakeholders to respond to sustainability issues. This can best be achieved by establishing and implementing a set of policies for tourism development and management, drawn up in concert with others. The principles of sustainable development put emphasis on local determination and implementation of policies and actions. This should be placed within a supportive national policy framework.

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