

**PERCEPTION ON THE NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF
RECREATION ACTIVITIES OF VISITORS AND STAFF AT NATIONAL
PARKS IN CENTRAL KENYA REGION**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in this or any other university

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Date.....6/6/18

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We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family for their support in completing my bachelor's and now my masters' degree.

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ABSTRACT

Outdoor recreationists are prone to choose places with eye-catching sceneries, and landscape with special characteristics as their recreations activity location. Since outdoor recreational activities occur in natural environment, such activities can cause significant harm to the environment if not managed properly. The study examined perceptions on the negative environmental impact of recreational activities of visitors and staff at National Park in Central Kenya Region. The descriptive survey research design was used and the target population comprised of both the park visitors and the park staff (KWS and KFS). Stratified sampling was used to ensure that the target population was well represented. Daily visitors' register was used to select at least 50% of the park visitors. At an average, Mt Kenya National Park had approximately 16000 visitors per year translating to 44 visitors per day. Then 50% of the entry routes to Mt Kenya were selected. Aberdares National Park had approximately 40000 visitors per year translating to 111 visitors per day. The study utilized purposive census method to generate a total sample (n=155). Subsequently, stratified random sampling was used to ensure that 50% of the park gates from Nyeri and Nyahururu routes were represented. A questionnaire was the main instrument used for the data collection. Data obtained was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The data were gathered from two categories of respondents: 145 parks staff and 118 parks visitors. Majority of the respondent were male 159 (60.5%) and female 98(37.3%), and most of the respondents were in the age category of 36-55 years 109(41.4%), while a proportion of park visitors 66(55.9%) had visited the park more than once. Hypotheses were tested using Independent T- test. Both the staff and the visitors indicated Hiking/climbing/safari walk 215(83.7%) as the most preferred recreation activity. On the perception of the recreation activity that negatively affect the environment, the two groups are significantly different, except in cycling/Mt biking/Game drive visitors ($\bar{X}=1.67$, SD =0.83) while staff ($\bar{X}=2.34$, SD =0.85). Further, Hiking/climbing/ safari walk ranked as an activity with the highest negative environmental effect by 168(65.6%) of the respondents. .On perception of effect of recreation activities on environment resource attributes, the two groups were significantly different except in Wildlife ($t=0.28$, $df=240$, $p<0.14$). In order to minimize recreation impact and improve quality of visitors experience a range of direct management practices, strategies and techniques such as; proactive planning and change of design of recreation facilities construction and maintenance among others should be applied to limit negative effects Further research should be done on each of the parks environmental resource attribute.