

# **Efficacy of Codes of Conduct in Promoting Responsible Tourism Practices Within the Mount Kenya World Heritage Site**

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## **Abstract**

The objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the existing codes of conducts in promoting responsible tourism practices in Mount Kenya World Heritage Site. The study focused on the dissemination strategies adopted to ensure that the existing codes of conduct are communicated to the relevant stakeholders and to what extent the existing codes of conduct in Mount Kenya World Heritage Site have enhanced responsible tourism practices. The study adopted descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study involved KWS and KFS officials as key informants, registered Mount Kenya porters and guides and tourists visiting Mount Kenya World Heritage site. The study covered a total of 343 respondents. Data was collected using structured questionnaires in Likert scale form and key informant interviews. The findings of the study indicated that codes of conduct for Mount Kenya World Heritage Site are well disseminated through training of the relevant stakeholders, putting up signage along the trails, briefing tourists before conducting tours and communicating the codes to the stakeholders. Additionally, the results of the study indicated that codes of conduct have contributed towards responsible tourism practises through raising awareness on responsible tourism, protection and conservation of natural and cultural resources, visitor management and regulation tourists behaviour.

**Key words:** mountain tourism, responsible tourism, codes of conduct, Sustainability, Global Code of Ethics.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is a significant global economic activity and an important factor in the growth and prosperity of mountainous areas (Euromontana, 2017). Its operations however, have had both direct and indirect implications for the environment, the community and the industry as a whole. According to Castellani & Sala, (2010) the global awareness of the consequences culminated in the crafting of responsible tourism programs agreed upon at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. As a result, both Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration for Sustainable development were established. Following this development, a number of initiatives have been adopted to actualize the aspirations of the sustainability Agenda. Responsible tourism is a key approach in sustainable tourism as it seeks to promote environmental responsibility through sustainable use of available resources, local community involvement in the tourism industry, enhancement of visitor safety and security, economic viability and creation of a sense of accountability and responsible actions of all tourism stakeholders (South Africa Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996).

A code of conduct, according to Zhang, Zhang and Song (2002), is "a set of standards of behaviour articulated as either a, a social norm, or a rule of law sanctioned by enforcement authorities, and it serves as a set of guidelines or rules that all participants must follow. Weaver (2001), connecting the concept to the tourist context, categorized codes of conduct as one of the subgroups of quality control, alongside accreditation and quality systems, and alleged that codes of practice served as an industry general guide to behaviour for tourism players. Contributing to this debate, Buzar (2015) classifies codes of conduct as a branch of quality management in ecotourism, alongside accreditation and quality systems stating that codes of conduct are codes of practice that serve as a general guide to action in the industry as highlighted by Weaver (2001). Mason (1997) stated that codes of conduct are a very useful instrument for preventing and minimizing negative impacts caused by visitors, as well as regulating the activities of tourism enterprise operators, in order to support the best practices of sustainable tourism development. As a result, disseminating code information through stakeholders' education

and marketing plays an important role in sending an appropriate message to potential tourists and tourism business operators regarding raising their awareness of sustainability before, during, and after their visits to a tourist destination hence attracting them.

### **Statement of the problem**

Quality and comprehensive codes of conduct for tourism go a long way in minimizing the negative social and environmental impacts of tourism in destinations. The codes should therefore not only help in regulating behaviour, educating and informing those participating in tourism activities on how to conduct themselves responsibly but also to raise awareness on the significance of promoting a responsible tourism practices culture to enhance destination sustainability. However, previous researchers have pointed out, there has been sparse scrutiny of the effectiveness of the codes of conduct in promoting responsible tourism practices (Holden, 2000; Malloy & Fennell; Mason, 2005).

Mount Kenya World Heritage Site is a unique tourism destination offering a diverse of tourism products from wildlife safaris to outdoor recreation adventure. The mountain ecosystem is fragile and prone to issues such as and not limited to environmental degradation, waste management, pollution and visitor management issues and therefore, regulation of stakeholders' behaviour is critical in order to protect and conserve the mountain resources. As a result, the management of the Mount Kenya World Heritage Site has developed various codes of conduct namely: tourist code of conduct, tourism business operator's codes of conduct and environmental codes of conduct in order to regulate stakeholder behaviour and create a sense of responsibility and accountability of actions while participating in mountain tourism related activities.

However, the mountain is still facing threats such environmental degradation due to over-exploitation of the mountain resources such as the forest cover, lack of proper management of both excreta and solid waste generated as a result of tourist activities on the mountain, fire outbreaks, human wildlife conflicts and visitor management issues as outlined by the IUCN (2020). This has raised concerns on the effectiveness of the developed codes of conduct in informing and enhancing responsible tourism practices and thus the need for the study.

### **Study objectives**

1. To assess the codes of conduct dissemination strategies adopted and their contribution in promoting responsible tourism practices in Mount Kenya World Heritage Site
2. To examine the efficacy of existing codes of conduct in promoting responsible tourism practices in Mount Kenya World Heritage Site.

### **Hypothesis of the study**

H<sub>01</sub> There is no significant relationship between tourism codes of conduct and responsible tourism practices

### **RESPONSIBLE TOURISM CONCEPT**

Concerns over the natural and social environments have generated research debate on tourism - environment relationship over time. This debate gained momentum in the early 1970s when George Young argued that the impacts of tourism are both a blessing and a blight (Young, 1973). Young's argument was based on the implications caused by tourism both the negative impacts such as environmental degradation that was as a result of mass tourism and the benefits accrued such as promoting economic growth. Krippendorf, (1982) challenged the sense of mass tourism in his book entitled 'Vacation People' and began the search for tourism alternatives that would replace mass tourism. The author recognized that tourists were becoming more complex in their needs, and that the industry would have to adopt more 'environmentally-orientated and socially responsible' marketing practices in order to maintain satisfaction levels into the future for a more demanding and segmented market.

Spenceley, Relly and Keysen (2002) argued that responsible tourism is about providing better holiday experiences for guests and good business opportunities for tourism enterprises while enabling local communities to enjoy a better quality of life through increased socio-economic benefits and improved natural resource management. Responsible tourism as outlined by Tourism Department of the City of Cape Town, (2002), is founded on accountable behaviour, ethical principles, and good governance and is built on three sustainability pillars: environment, economics, and social culture. According to the Centre for Responsible Travel (2017) there is a strong evidence that responsible tourism contributes to the triple bottom line of a tourism destination sustainability which means that responsible tourism aids in creates awareness and support for environmental conservation, preservation of local culture and generation of economic benefits and opportunities for stakeholders (UNEP, 2005). In this regard, development of responsible tourism management strategies can clearly contribute to achievement of a competitive advantage in the current market tourism environment (Koutra & Edwards, 2012).

Noting the above inherent characteristics, responsible tourism is being recognized not as a different form of tourism but rather a pathway towards achieving the tourism sustainability Agenda (UNEP, 2005). A

growing number of tourism destinations in the efforts to create a sense of accountability for the actions of the stakeholders are establishing environmental divisions, implementing environmental and social best practices, pursuing certification, and searching for ways to "green" along their supply chains (Business Case for Responsible Tourism, 2019). The noted action strategies notwithstanding, Mihalic (2016) observes that there is a mismatch between sustainable tourism and its alarmingly slow penetration of action and practice which is clearly linked to irresponsible tourism conduct.

### **TOWARDS PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE MOUNTAIN TOURISM THROUGH CODES OF CONDUCT**

Dubois (2000) suggested that tourists with distinct value systems in terms of their backgrounds, such as social environment, cultural identity, and way of life, may generate conflicts with local customs and the natural environment during encounters and interactions. As a result, codes of conduct have been developed for tourists in order to educate them about the societies they visit and how to behave without infringing the members of the local communities during their interactions. In this regard, codes of conduct have been used as a visitor management tool, with the goals of preventing or minimizing potential negative impacts of tourists on the destinations they visit (Cole, 2007). The code of conduct approach, as stated by Vassileva (2007) has received widespread acceptance as a useful tool with the potential to reduce negative tourist impacts on a tourist destination. This is, to a greater or lesser extent, consistent with the UNWTO's Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, which serves as a frame of reference for responsible and sustainable tourism development among UNWTO member countries, particularly in the business sector (Tay, Chan, Vogt & Mohamed, 2017).

The UNWTO General Assembly meeting of 1997 developed the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics which called for a set of industry principles to guide stakeholders in the process of tourism development (UNWTO 2012). The Code aimed to minimize the negative impacts of a growing global tourism industry on the environment and cultural heritage, while maximizing potential benefits for the residents of tourism destinations (UNWTO 2012). World Tourism Organization (2018), stated that global codes of conduct have been established to manage the activities and practices of all tourism industry stakeholders. As a result, a tourism Bill of Rights, a Tourist Code of Conduct and a Global Code of Ethics were established. The Codes are viewed as a guideline for the responsible and long-term growth of global tourism. International conservation organizations, such as the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, have also established codes of conduct. On the other hand, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) released a document called Environmental Codes of Conduct for Tourism with the aim of promoting environmental protection (UNEP, 2011). Since then, a number of codes of conduct have been developed as tabulated below.

*Table 1: Examples of codes of conduct globally*

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Title of code</b>
WWF	➤ Code of conduct for Mediterranean tourists ➤ The Ten Principles for Arctic ➤ Tourism Code of Conduct for Tour Operators in the Arctic ➤ Code of Conduct for Tourists in the Arctic
World Travel and Tourism Council	➤ The WTTC's Environmental Guidelines
Tourism Concern	➤ Going travelling The Himalayan Tourist Code
RSPB	➤ Code of conduct for birdwatchers
Responsibletravel.com	➤ Tips for Responsible travellers
Ecumenical Coalition of Third World Tourism (ECTWT)	➤ Code of ethics for tourism

Source: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya>

According to the UNEP (2011), tourism codes of conducts primarily focus on environmental impacts and improving environmental management. The message of codes, however, is not just confined to environmental issues. A number of visitor codes make reference to socio-cultural matters, such as respect for local religious beliefs, conservation of cultural heritage and respect of the local community cultural values and way of life (Mason & Mowforth, 1996). Genot (1995) noted that voluntary environmental codes of conduct are a promising method for raising environmental consciousness and improving attitudes and practices and if voluntary codes are to be useful, Genot believes that codes must be precise, action-oriented, and accompanied by programs that promote implementation, tracking, and reporting of performance. The author further suggested that if codes are to be accurate and credible, those who prepare them must be responsible for their implementation and follow-up.

Codes must be conceived from the start as a practical benchmark against which environmental performance can be gauged and performance monitored. Cole (2007) opines that the establishment of tourist codes of conduct should be done with the involvement and participation of local stakeholders and should be widely circulated and prominently displayed so that tourists can easily access them. Furthermore, according to Cole, the particular terminology used in the codes of conduct has an effect on tourist comprehension and enforcement. In addition, Cole noted that there is a mismatch between what tourists say and how they act, and that observations are necessary to accurately assess how much the codes of conduct affect tourist behaviour.

According to Mason and Mowforth (1996) a suitable system of reference be made readily available to visitors and other industry participants who want to check statements made by any members of the industry through a code of conduct. Furthermore, as stated by Langlois and Schlegelmilch, (1990) Codes should be explicit so that the expected or denied behaviour of a person can be easily understood, and they should also be comprehensive enough that referring to the code will aid in implementing the solution. Enforcement of the codes of conduct is critical to the code's long-term effectiveness; without it, the code becomes a sham rather than a proactive tool for improving corporate culture and quality. Tourism codes of conduct (Mason, 1997) should be written in a way that emphasizes and rewards doing the right thing, rather than indicating restrictions of wrong behaviour that may offend the innocent user of the code.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to Kothari (2014) data findings become more reliable when the researcher applies different approaches to acquire the same information. The target population for the study comprised of the relevant stakeholders including public sector officers, porters, guides and tourists visiting Mount Kenya World Heritage Site. The study used proportionate random stratified sampling technique for the targeted mountain stakeholders who were divided into strata with a proportional allocation of each stratum for the study. The strata consisted of two sub-groups; tourists, and guides and porters'. Stratified sampling technique is used for data which are heterogeneous in nature (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Convenience sampling was used to select respondents from each sub-group depending on respondent's availability and willingness to participate until the required sample size was reached. Convenience sampling is preferred when there is no designated time and schedule that the researcher would use to reach the respondents and thus it was opportunistic. A sample size of 178 porters and guides and 162 tourists was selected for the study. The study employed purposive sampling for the key informants' interviews. Purposive sampling is an intentional selection of informants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon (Robinson, 2014) and for this study ,it enabled the researcher to select respondents who were conversant with tourism policies and codes of conduct development and implementation. Prior booking of appointments was made for the key informants.

**Table 2.1 Summary of sample size and sampling techniques**

Stakeholder category	Sample size
KFS Mount Kenya ecosystem officer	1
Mount Kenya Porters and Guides Association official	1
Director Mountain Areas Conservation central region	1
Mount Kenya Porters and guides	178
Visitors	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>

The study employed the use of both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through use of structured questionnaires in Likert scale format for the quantitative data while qualitative data was obtained using in-depth interviews of the key informants. Secondary data was obtained through document analyses of official publications/records and manuals. To ensure reliability of the quantitative research instruments, Cronbach's Alpha Correlation Coefficient, which expresses the degree of reliability, was calculated using the statistical kit for social sciences SPSS. Cronbach alpha has a spectrum of 0-1, with a value of 0-0.6 indicating a low level of reliability and internal consistency, and a value of 0.7 to 1 indicating a high level of reliability and internal consistency. From the results the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was found to be 0.756 and showed that the research instrument was consistent. Validity of the research instruments was ensured by

carrying out face and content checks to ensure that the data collection instruments serve the intended purpose (Hair, 2007).

Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. A regression model was used to establish the efficacy of tourism codes of conduct on promoting responsible mountain tourism practices. ANOVA was used to determine the fitness of the overall model. Bivariate analyses including correlation and regression analyses were computed to establish the relationship between the dependent and the independent variable.

### **III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **3.1 Respondents Demographics**

The total number of study respondents who successfully participated in the study was 281 guides and porters out of the total sample size of 340 that had been sampled distributed as follows; 177 Kenya Wildlife Service registered porters and guides representing 66.1% response rate and 104 visitors representing 58.6% response rate. However, the tourists, guides and porters response rates indicated a satisfactory return rate as argued by Mugenda Mugenda (2008) that a 50% and above return on the response rate is adequate and sufficient for a researcher to carry out data analysis. The demographic analysis of the guides and porters indicated that out of the 177 porters, 60.7% were tour guides while 39.3% were porters. On the gender participation of the guides and porters 83.8% were males with only 16.2% females indicating that more males took the guides and porters roles as compared to women. On the education levels of the porters and guides, 48.7% had obtained relevant diploma and certificates, 28.2% of the respondents had completed their secondary education 16.2% had attained education up to primary level and 6.8% were below primary school level. The study sought the period of operation of the porters and guides in Mount Kenya World Heritage Site and the findings demonstrated that 70.1% of the respondents had operated in the heritage site for more than three years, with 20.5% between 1-2 years and 9.4% below one year.

The visitor demographics demonstrated that out of 104 visitors who participated who participated in the study 57.7% were male and 42.3% were females. The study findings also established that majority of the visitors touring the Mount Kenya World Heritage Site were the millennials (1981-1996) with a response rate of 44.2% followed with a close margin by generation Z (1997-2012) with a response rate of 35.6%. Generation X (1965-1980) had a representation of 14.4% with the baby boomers (1946-1964) having the least response rate of 5.8%. Three officers; KWS officer, Forester KFS and an official from Mount Kenya Porters and Guides Association participated in key informants interviews .

#### **3.2 Porters and guides perspective on Responsible Tourism Practices in Mount Kenya World Heritage Site**

The study established a number of responsible tourism practices around the Mount Kenya World Heritage Site and Table 1 presents findings on the extent to which guides and porters either agreed or disagreed with the given statements on the responsible tourism practices adopted in MKWHS. The data reveals that majority (95.8%) of the guides and porters agreed to tourists appreciating the natural landscapes of Mount Kenya World Heritage Site. On the question of inclusivity, majority (88%) of the guides and porters agreed to the inclusivity of stakeholder involvement in the heritage site. The study findings indicated that there is effective management of waste using the 3R strategy with 98.3% of the guides and porters agreeing to that statement. On the issue of sports and outdoor activities in Mount Kenya world heritage site being conducted responsibly, 98.3% of the guides and porters were in agreement. Majority of the guides and porters (92.3 %) indicated that there was conservation and preservation of the mountain cultural value. Lastly, majority of the respondents (84.7%) agreed to stakeholders being educated on matters responsible tourism practices. All the key informants agreed that: tourists appreciated the natural landscapes of the heritage site, there was stakeholder inclusivity, there is effective waste management using the pack it in-pack it out rule and that the mountain cultural value was preserved.

The study further revealed that only 51.3% of the respondents were in agreement with there being a trickle-down effect of tourism benefits while 48.7% demonstrated were not sure. Addressing the issue of the trickle-down effect of tourism benefits, the KWS officer stated that;

‘Trickle –down effect of tourism benefits especially to the local communities has not been fully achieved as mountain tourism is still a new concept whose potential has not yet been fully exploited.’

This finding indicated that to some extent, mountain tourism benefits are transmitted to the local community. On the same breath, (57.3%) of the guides and porters agreed to human wildlife conflicts being effectively managed, however 42.7% were not sure. The KWS officer on the issue of human wildlife conflicts stated that;

‘Human-wildlife conflicts remain to be a challenge in Mount Kenya ecosystem as local communities are still searching for land for agriculture and livestock feeding without minding wildlife habitats as they trespass.’

**Table 3.1: Guides and Porters Perspective on Responsible Tourism Practices (N=117)**

Responsible tourism practices	SD	D	SD+D	NS	A	SA	A+SA
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Tourists appreciates natural landscapes	0	0.9	0.9	3.4	47.9	47.9	95.8
There is inclusivity in stakeholder involvement	0	0.9	0.9	11.1	45.3	42.7	88
There is effective waste management that involves 3Rs	0	0	0	1.7	36.8	61.5	98.3
Sports and outdoor activities are managed responsibly	0	0	0	1.7	48.7	49.6	98.3
There is conservation and preservation of cultural value	0	0	0	7.7	48.7	43.6	92.3
There is trickle-down effect	0	0	0	48.7	35.9	15.4	51.3
Human-wildlife conflicts are effectively managed	0	0	0	42.7	40.2	17.1	57.3
Stakeholders have been educated	0	6.0	0	9.4	65.0	19.7	84.7

**KEY:** SD: Strongly disagree D: Disagree NS: Not Sure A: Agree SA: Strongly agree

**3.2.1 Tourist perspective on responsible tourism practices in MKWHS**

The study sought to seek tourist’s perception on responsible tourism practices in Mount Kenya world Heritage site on key practices in which they were directly involved. According to the research findings all the visitors who participated in the study agreed to tourists appreciating the natural landscapes. The data as presented in table 4.10 reveals that 50% of the visitors agreed to there being effective waste management while 43.3% were not sure. Majority of the visitors (90%) agreed that sports and outdoor activities in the heritage site are managed responsibly while 80% agreed that there is conservation and preservation of the cultural value of Mount Kenya World Heritage Site.

**Table 3.2: Visitors perspective on RTP (N= 104)**

Responsible Tourism Practices	SD	D	SD+D	NS	A	SA	A+SA
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Tourists appreciates natural landscapes	0	0	0	0	50	50	100
There is effective waste management that involves 3Rs	0	6.7	6.7	43.3	36.7	13.3	50
Sports and outdoor activities are managed responsibly	0	0	0	10	63.3	26.7	90
There is conservation and preservation of cultural value	0	0	0	20	63.3	16.7	80

**KEY:** SD: Strongly disagree D: Disagree NS: Not Sure A: Agree SA: Strongly agree

From the above findings on the perspectives of responsible tourism practices in Mount Kenya World Heritage site, sports and outdoor activities within the ecosystem are conducted responsibly. Additionally, tourists appreciate the natural landscapes of the heritage site and preservation and conservation of cultural values is evident. To ensure that there is no imbalance of power, there is inclusivity of stakeholders to enhance accountability of actions. Effective waste management involving the 3R (reduce, reuse, and recycle) has been practiced. However, mitigation of human wildlife conflicts and the realization of the trickle-down effect of tourism benefits within the mountain ecosystem has not been fully achieved.

The findings of the study are similar to those of Goodwin (2002) which suggested that responsible tourism practices should aim at improving the resident's quality of life, promote social economic benefits and help in conserving natural resources in the tourism destinations. Furthermore, the findings lend credence to Lian and Saikim (2021) who argued that responsible tourism practices place a strong emphasis on the environments and a long term viability of natural resources through, conserving, preserving and protecting the environment. In addition, responsible tourism practices limit harmful consequences to the ecosystem by regulating the manner in which tours are conducted and collaborations with stakeholders, control and rules enhance responsibility as demonstrated by the study and supported by the findings of Lian and Saikim, (2021).

### 3.3 Porters and guides perspective on dissemination strategies for codes of conduct

According to the study findings, 46.2% of the respondents agreed to there being a tourist code of conduct and 48.8% agreed that there was an existing code of conduct for the industry players. However only 3.4% of the respondents agreed to the existence of an environmental codes of conduct and 1.7% of the respondents suggested that besides the three listed codes of conducts there were other codes. This study findings corresponded to those from the interview where officer 1 stated that;

‘While the KWS has general codes of conducts governing all the parks in the country, in the year 2020 with involvement of the stakeholders, Mount Kenya specific codes of conduct were developed to regulate behaviour as well as ensure that all stakeholders adhere to safety and health protocols. The codes are divided to subsections to address the different stakeholders such as tourists, porters, guides and the tourism industry players within the mountain ecosystem.’

The study sought to establish the strategies that were adopted in Mount Kenya World Heritage Site to distribute information and share intervention materials relating to the codes of conduct to the relevant stakeholders. Table 3 indicates that 46.9% of the guides and porters agreed that codes of conduct were effectively communicated thus creating awareness while 50.4% were not sure. However majority of the guides and porters (94.9%) agreed that there are training modules of stakeholders, 94.8% agreed that tourists are briefed prior to participation of mountain tourism activities and 93.1% agreed that there are signage along the trails to guide the Tourists. The study reveal that 53% were not sure whether there were set penalties for those who fail to adhere to the set codes while 38.5% agreed. The study also found out that majority of the guides and porters (82.9%) agreed that the language used for existing codes of conduct easy to understand while 14.5% were not sure. The KWS officer adding to the findings stated that;

‘Currently codes of conducts write-up are available in English language, however we are cognisant of the fact that Swahili is a national language and we are in the process of converting all our information to Swahili for palatability. On the same note, we are working to collaborate with the stakeholders from the private sector and engaging the guides and porters associations to see how we can build capacity with them to have people who are multilingual since converting the codes information to different languages is expensive.’

The study findings demonstrated mixed responses on the issue of monitoring and evaluation of the codes of conduct with 52.1% of the guides and porters indicating that they were not sure whether monitoring and evaluation of codes of conduct was done while 20.5% agreed and 27.4% disagreed. The findings were supported by the key informant interviews and addressing the issue of monitoring and evaluation of the codes of conduct KWS officer stated that;

‘While monitoring and evaluation is key in measuring the effectiveness of any tool ,codes of conduct for Mount Kenya World Heritage site have not been reviewed yet since they are barely one year since they were developed ,however they will definitely be reviewed to assess their effectiveness with time.’

**Table 3.3: Guides and Porters perspective on dissemination strategies for Codes of conduct (N=117)**

Dissemination strategies	SD	D	SD+D	NS	A	SA	A+SA
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Codes of conduct are effectively communicated	0	3.4	3.4	50.4	41.9	4.3	46.2
There are training modules of stakeholders	0	0	0	5.1	39.3	55.6	94.9
Tourists are briefed prior to participation of activities	0	0.9	0.9	4.3	22.2	72.6	94.8
There are signage on trails	0	2.6	2.6	4.3	35.0	58.1	93.1
Codes are easy to read and understand	0	2.6	2.6	14.5	59.0	23.9	82.9
There is monitoring and evaluation	7.7	19.7	27.4	52.1	16.2	4.3	20.5

There are set penalties for those who fail to adhere to the set codes	0.9	7.7	8.6	53	28.2	10.3	38.5
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KEY: SD: Strongly disagree D: Disagree NS: Not Sure A: Agree SA: Strongly agree

### 3.4.1 Visitors perspective on dissemination strategies for codes of conduct

The researcher sought to establish the visitors’ perspective on the codes of conduct dissemination strategies. From the study, majority of the visitors (70%) agreed that codes of conduct are effectively communicated and 26.7% of the visitors were not sure. In addition, majority of the visitors (90%) agreed that tourists are briefed prior to participation of activities while there were mixed responses on the display of codes of conduct on whether the language is easy to read and understand where 66.7% of the visitors agreed and 26.7% were not sure. On the same breath, , 46.7% disagreed there were set penalties for those who fail to adhere to the set codes, 23.3% of the visitors agreed and 23.3% were not sure as represented in table 4.

**Table 3.4: Visitors perspective on Dissemination of codes of conduct- (N=104)**

Dissemination strategies	SD	D	SD+D	NS	A	SA	SA+A
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Codes of conduct are effectively communicated	3.3	0	3.3	26.7	26.7	43.3	70
Tourists are briefed prior to participation of activities	0	0	0	10	53.3	36.7	90
There are signage on trails	0	0	0	43.3	33.3	23.3	56.6
Codes are easy to read and understand	0	6.7	6.7	26.7	46.7	20	66.7
There are set penalties for those who fail to adhere to the set codes	6.7	46.7	53.4	23.3	10	13.3	23.3

KEY: SD: Strongly disagree D: Disagree NS: Not Sure A: Agree SA: Strongly agree

### 3.5 Guides and Porters perspective on the effect of Codes of conduct in promoting responsible tourism practices

The study sought to establish the extent to which the guides and porters either agreed or disagreed with the given statements on the effect of codes of conduct in promoting responsible tourism Practices. Table 4 indicates that majority of the respondents represented by 92.3% response rate agreed that existing codes of conduct help in protection of natural and cultural resources in Mount Kenya World Heritage Site ,while 7.7% of the respondents averagely agreed to the same. On the same breath, 91.4% of the respondents agreed that codes of conduct aid in minimizing tourism negative impacts while 98.3% agreed that the existing codes of conduct helped in raising responsible and sustainability awareness among the tourism stakeholders. The findings of the study also demonstrated that 92.3% of the respondents agreed that codes educate tourists on how to behave without causing offence .The data reveals 83.8% of the respondents agreed that codes of conduct act as a persuasive communication to give guidance, however 16.2% of the respondents had an average agreement on the same issue. About codes of conduct acting as a visitor management tool, 65.8% as demonstrated in table 5 agreed while 34.2% expressed no surety as they averagely agreed.

From the study findings it’s noteworthy that the existing codes of conduct in Mount Kenya world heritage site play a critical role in promoting responsible tourism practices. Contributing to the findings, the KFS officer stating that:

‘Though the enforcement of the codes of conduct have not been fully realised, we can confidently say that the codes have played a critical role in regulating behaviour and inform visitors ,guides and porters on how they are expected to conduct themselves while ascending and descending the mountain to ensure they leave no negative traces behind.’

**Table 3.5: Effects of codes of conduct in promoting RTP-Guides and Porters perspective (N=117)**

Codes for RTP	SD	D	SD+D	NS	A	SA	A+SA
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Codes help in protection of natural and cultural resources	0	0	0	7.7	74.4	17.9	92.3
Codes help in minimizing tourism negative impacts	0	0.9	0.9	7.7	65.8	25.6	91.4



Codes help in raising responsible and sustainability awareness	0	0.9	0.9	0.9	59.0	39.3	98.3
Codes educate tourists on how to behave without causing offence	0	0.9	0.9	6.8	52.1	40.2	92.3
Codes act as a persuasive communication giving guidance	0	0	0	16.2	57.3	26.5	83.8
Codes act as a visitor management tool by industry players	0	0	0	34.2	45.3	20.5	65.8

**KEY:** SD: Strongly disagree D: Disagree NS: Not Sure A: Agree SA: Strongly agree

**3.5.1 Visitors’ perspective on the effect of codes of conduct in promoting responsible tourism practices**

As demonstrated in table 4.8, all the respondents agreed that codes of conduct help in protection of natural and cultural resources. The data also reveals that while 70% of the respondents agreed that codes of conduct help in minimizing tourism negative impacts, 30% demonstrated no surety as they averagely agreed. On the issue of whether codes of conduct help in raising responsible and sustainability awareness, 83.4% of the respondents agreed while 16.7% had an average agreement on the same. From the study findings, 60% of the respondents agreed that codes of conduct educate tourists on how to behave without causing offence, 36.7% had an average agreement indicating no surety while 3.3% disagreed. In addition, only 33.4% of the respondents agreed to codes of conduct acting as a persuasive communication giving guidance, 63.3% had an average agreement and 3.3% disagreed.

**Table 3.6: Visitors’ perspective on the effects of codes of conduct in promoting RTP (N=104)**

Codes of conduct in promoting RTP	SD	D	SD+D	NS	A	SA	A+SA
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Codes help in protection of natural and cultural resources	0	0	0	0	50	50	100
Codes help in minimizing tourism negative impacts	0	0	0	30	36.7	33.3	70
Codes help in raising responsible and sustainability awareness	0	0	0	16.7	46.7	36.7	83.4
Codes educate tourists on how to behave without causing offence	0	3.3	3.3	36.7	40	20	60
Codes act as a persuasive communication giving guidance	0	3.3	3.3	63.3	16.7	16.7	33.4

**KEY:** SD: Strongly disagree D: Disagree NS: Not Sure A: Agree SA: Strongly agree

These findings demonstrate that codes of conduct play a significant role in promoting responsible tourism practices in Mount Kenya World Heritage Site and as such, all the involved tourism stakeholders need to embrace and advocate for the holistic implementation of the established codes of conduct. However, for destinations to achieve the goal of enhancing responsible tourism practices with Mount Kenya World heritage site codes of conduct should be effectively communicated through strengthening of the already existing communication strategies as indicated by the respondents; training ,briefing of the visitors, displaying of the codes of conducts using a language that involved stakeholders can understand ,using signage and setting of penalties for those who may fail to adhere to the set rules and regulations. However, more strategies can be devised to ensure that information relating to the codes of conduct can reach a wider group of the target stakeholders easily.

According to the study findings, tourism practitioners in Mount Kenya World Heritage Site can utilize the codes of conduct as a visitor management tool to ensure that tours are conducted responsibly and that visitors conduct themselves in a way that does not harm the environment or cause offense to the local communities thus protecting and conserving both the natural and cultural resources. Additionally, the codes of conduct can be used to raise awareness on destination sustainability and thus advocating for more responsible actions among all the stakeholders involved. Persuasive communication of the codes of conduct to those participating in the mountain tourism practices can also act as a guiding tool and this results in responsible mountain tourism practices.

The study findings are similar to those of Cole (2007) on assessing the effectiveness of the codes of conduct. Cole stated that stakeholder involvement in the development of codes of conduct, display of the codes of conduct, and their circulation has significance on their effectiveness in influencing responsible tourism practices such as raising environmental consciousness and improving attitudes and practices. Tourism codes of

conduct as revealed by the findings of the study and supported by Mason (1997) play an integral role in enhancing responsible tourism practices and enhancing conservation and protection of both cultural and natural resources. Key to this however, is that incorporating and coordinating codes of conduct into a country's larger planning strategy is paramount to ensure the efficacy of codes of conduct as suggested by Genot (1996). Suitable systems of reference for the codes of conduct should be made readily available to all stakeholders and for the balancing of power, all stakeholders should be involved in the development and formulation of policies. In addition, as pointed out by Harkrider (2012) negative impacts of visitors' behaviour in a destination can be minimized by informing and modifying their actions using codes of conducts that have been factored in by policy makers as a long-term strategy.

**3.6 Relationship between codes of conduct and responsible tourism practices**

The study further sought to test the relationship between codes of conduct and responsible mountain tourism practices. As shown in Table 4.7.2, the R value was 0.478 signifying there is a relationship between codes of conduct and responsible tourism practices. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.208 indicates that 20.8% of responsible tourism practices is explained by codes of conduct all factors held constant.

**Table 3.7: Relationship between codes of conduct and responsible tourism practices**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.478 <sup>a</sup>	.228	.208	.32866	.228	22.06	1	115	.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Codes of conduct

The results for the analysis of Variance indicated that the model was significant at p value 0.001 which is less than 0.05 with the F ratio=22.06 as presented in table 4.7.2 below. This indicates that when reviewed separately Codes of conduct have a significant effect on responsible tourism practices. As shown in table 3.8 for the coefficients of the model, with  $\beta=0.131$  at p value of 0.001 which is less than 0.05 shows that codes of conduct had a significant effect on Responsible tourism practices. The model bivariate linear regression is  $Y=0.131+3.586 (X_2) +e$  where 3.586 is the constant where the regression equation crosses Y-axis and X<sub>2</sub> is the codes of conduct index.

**Table 3.8: Coefficients of the model**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.586	.430		8.333	.000
	CODESOFCONDUCT	.152	.107	.131	1.416	.001

**IV. CONCLUSION**

Tourism codes of conduct play an integral role in promoting responsible tourism practices by regulating and informing tourism behaviour. Persuasive communication of the codes to the tourists acts as a guidance and helps in minimizing the negative impacts of tourism within the tourism destinations. Additionally, regulated human behaviours protects and conserves both natural and cultural resources. Familiarizing stakeholders with the codes of conduct makes a significant contribution in raising responsible tourism awareness and manage visitors while at the destination. This study found out that the management in Mount Kenya World Heritage site has established strategies to disseminate codes information to stakeholders, however more strategies such as providing codes information in variety of languages need to be put in place in order to reach out to all stakeholders.

**V. RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 Policy recommendation**

In view of the above findings, the study recommendations that in the case of Mount Kenya World Heritage Site, tourism practitioners can utilize the codes of conduct as a visitor management tool to ensure that tours are conducted responsibly and that visitors conduct themselves in a way that does not harm the environment or cause offense to the local communities. Additionally, the codes of conduct can be used to raise awareness on destination sustainability and thus advocating for more responsible actions among all the

stakeholders involved. Persuasive communication of the codes of conduct to those participating in the mountain tourism practices can also act as a guiding tool and this results in responsible mountain tourism practices.

The government through the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife should consider integrating codes of conduct in the larger tourism strategy documents and develop a monitoring and evaluation tool to ensure and enhance the effectiveness of the codes. However, having the codes of conduct developed and integrated into the main tourism policy documents is not adequate and function where there is no set strategies for dissemination of the codes. Effectiveness of the codes of conduct is influenced by how well dissemination of the codes of conduct information is done ensuring that: the language used is to read, understand and comprehend the contents of the codes, enhancing inclusive involvement of stakeholders in the development of the codes and taking advantage other communication channels such as social media platforms.

## **5.2 Recommendation for further studies**

Future studies can be conducted on the assessment level of stakeholders' awareness of the codes of conduct information in tourism destinations. An in-depth analysis can be done on the extent to which codes of conduct have managed to regulate stakeholders' behaviour and create a sustainability culture in tourism destinations. A similar study can also be conducted in a different tourism destination and a comparative analysis done.

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