



African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management

ajthm.eanso.org

Volume 3, Issue 1, 2024

Print ISSN: 2790-9603 | Online ISSN: 2790-9611

Title DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/2790-9611>



EAST AFRICAN
NATURE &
SCIENCE
ORGANIZATION

Original Article

Assessment of Socio-Economic Gender Issues Affecting Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism: A Case Study of Mt. Kenya National Park

Cornelius Kipchirchir^{1*}, Asborn Juma Misiko¹ & Dennis Cheruiyot Kiplangat¹

¹ Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Private Bag-10143, Nyeri, Kenya.

* Author for Correspondence Email: koechcor@gmail.com

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/ajthm.3.1.1755>

Date Published: **ABSTRACT**

13 February 2024

Keywords:

*Alpine Tourism,
Mountain Crew,
Equality.*

The study sought to investigate the socio-economic gender issues affecting women's participation in alpine tourism in Mt. Kenya National Park. The study was guided by the following objectives: to assess the social gender issues affecting women's participation in alpine tourism and to analyse the economic gender issues affecting women's participation in alpine tourism. The study used a descriptive research design, and data was collected through structured closed-ended questionnaires distributed to 133 women participating in alpine tourism activities. 107 questionnaires were duly filled and returned. Structured interviews were conducted with the officials of Kenya Wildlife Service and the leaders of Mt. Kenya Guides and Porters Association. Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis, and quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that the marital status of the female mountain crew was the dominant social gender issue affecting women's participation in alpine tourism as most guides, porters and cooks were unmarried, and for those who were married, the majority of them experienced challenges relating to balancing work and family responsibilities. The study also established that there is a wage disparity between men and women working as guides, porters, and cooks. The study recommends the need for policy makers to implement policies that promote gender equality in the workplace, ensuring equal opportunities for women to engage in alpine tourism activities such as guiding, portering and cooking. In addition, the study recommends the need to develop family-friendly policies which enable married women to fully participate in alpine tourism activities without compromising their family duties. The study also recommends the need for the Nyeri County Department of Tourism, Trade, Culture and Cooperative Development in partnership with Mt. Kenya Guides and Porters Association, to organise short course training on mountaineering and capacity-building programs to enhance the English language proficiency of female porters and cooks, thereby improving their communication skills and enabling them to interact more effectively with tourists. The study further recommends the need for Mt. Kenya Guides and Porters Association to undertake a sensitisation forum for its members about sexual harassment subjected to female mountain crew by men participating in alpine tourism activities.

APA CITATION

Kipchirchir, C., Misiko, A. J. & Kiplangat, D. C. (2024). Assessment of Socio-Economic Gender Issues Affecting Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism: A Case Study of Mt. Kenya National Park *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 3(1), 14-29. <https://doi.org/10.37284/ajthm.3.1.1755>.

CHICAGO CITATION

Kipchirchir, Cornelius, Asborn Juma Misiko and Dennis Cheruiyot Kiplangat. 2024. "Assessment of Socio-Economic Gender Issues Affecting Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism: A Case Study of Mt. Kenya National Park". *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management* 3 (1), 14-29. <https://doi.org/10.37284/ajthm.3.1.1755>.

HARVARD CITATION

Kipchirchir, C., Misiko, A. J. & Kiplangat, D. C. (2024) "Assessment of Socio-Economic Gender Issues Affecting Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism: A Case Study of Mt. Kenya National Park" *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 3(1), pp. 14-29. doi: 10.37284/ajthm.3.1.1755

IEEE CITATION

C. Kipchirchir, A. J. Misiko & D. C. Kiplangat, "Assessment of Socio-Economic Gender Issues Affecting Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism: A Case Study of Mt. Kenya National Park", *AJTHM*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 14-29, Feb. 2024.

MLA CITATION

Kipchirchir, Cornelius, Asborn Juma Misiko & Dennis Cheruiyot Kiplangat. "Assessment of Socio-Economic Gender Issues Affecting Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism: A Case Study of Mt. Kenya National Park". *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, Vol. 3, no. 1, Feb. 2024, pp. 14-29, doi:10.37284/ajthm.3.1.1755

INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays a vital role in the realisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. This is echoed in the Africa Agenda 2063 under Goal 17, which underscores gender equality and inclusivity in employment. The Kenya Constitution and Kenya Vision 2030 also recognise the role of gender equality and equity in promoting a wealthy and cohesive Kenya.

In Alpine tourism, the issue of gender equality in employment is still of great concern. Grandon (2007), in a study entitled 'Early women in tourism', mentions the involvement of Nepalese women in alpine tourism in the form of portering and cooking during the 1920s and 1930s. This beginning of Women's involvement in alpine tourism activities, which began in the 1920s has reached a point in the 21st century where women trekking guides are leading Mountain trekking for tourists in Nepal. In spite of that, the number is still very limited from a gender perspective compared to men (Grandon, 2007). Women's workforce involvement, especially on the popular trekking trails in mountain regions of Nepal, is limited to diversified jobs such as cooking, serving food to tourists, cleaning rooms, and performing cultural programs. These positions have no terms of employment like health - insurance benefits, stipulated working hours and also minimum wage, which is supposed to be paid to these women working in the alpine tourism sector (Logan, 2016).

In the tourism workforce in the Inca Trail in Peru, male and female guides, porters, and cooks have not been reading from the same page. The majority of female guides, porters and cooks who work on the Inca Trail, who were estimated to be less than 50 in 2019, reported varying levels of sexist behaviours from the male porters and guides, such as verbal, physical harassment and even sexual harassment. At times, the struggle involves being criticised for taking on a traditionally known "male" role of carrying loads on the trail and for taking away job opportunities from their male counterparts (Marinel, 2021). In Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, female guides, porters and cook's, majority of them who are unmarried, have been working for over 20 years, and the sexual harassment and dangerous work conditions on the trails like long working hours, low pay, and lack of proper gear are yet to be fully addressed by the ministry of tourism (Hazel, 2020).

In Kenya, the 2010 new constitutional dispensation brought an aspect of gender equality and social inclusion where men and women are entitled to equal job opportunities. Besides that, there is a ministry established both at the national and county government known as the ministry of Public Service, youth and gender affairs, which is supposed to champion and protect the rights of women. Despite the legislative gains the country has made in enhancing equality, gender disparities are evident in various sectors, with alpine tourism being one of them. In Mt Kenya, the second tallest mountain in Africa, guides, porters, and cooks

continue to face challenges that hinder them from fully benefiting from alpine tourism. For instance, women guides, porters, and cooks receive small incomes even during the peak tourism season in the mountains which is insufficient to meet household livelihood needs (Joseph, 2016). This has forced them to supplement alpine tourism income with on-farm-related activities and trading in farm commodities. The situation even becomes worse for women who do not have access to land as they have nothing to salvage themselves as a result of the low income they get from alpine tourism. In addition, given that most workers working as guides, porters and cooks are made up of high school graduates, they do not have relevant skills to help them provide professional service to their clients. Some of the most important skills lacking among the porters and cooks are language skills and mountain knowledge (Joseph, 2016). Language skills are specifically important to cater for European tourists who are regular visitors to the mountain, and because women are the ones in large numbers who lack language skills, a study was appropriate to be undertaken to identify why this is still happening in the contemporary society.

Problem Statement

Women have long been involved in alpine tourism as early as the 1920s, and yet prestigious Kenyan mountaineering positions such as lead guides and assistant guides are still dominated by men in the 21st century. This is happening despite the country having a progressive constitution advocating for gender equality in social and economic space. Beedie (2018) points out that men are the dominant group in the alpine tourism sector working as lead guides, assistant guides, and rescue guides, and there is minimal literature which has focused on mountain crew from a gender perspective. Thus, this study sought to investigate socio-economic gender issues affecting women's participation in Alpine Tourism in Mt. Kenya National Park.

Objectives of the study

- To assess the social gender issues affecting women's participation in Alpine Tourism in Mt. Kenya National Park.

To analyse the economic gender issues affecting women's participation in Alpine Tourism in Mt. Kenya National Park

- What are the social gender issues affecting women's participation in Alpine Tourism in Mt. Kenya National Park?
- What are the economic gender issues affecting women's participation in Alpine Tourism in Mt. Kenya National Park?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study used Feminist theory, which emerged from the struggle for women's rights, beginning in the 18th century with Mary Wollstonecraft's publication of "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman". Feminist theory examines inequalities in gender-related issues such as access to job opportunities, education, access to land, and engagement in economic activities where women are disadvantaged in accessing these opportunities (Burton, 2014). It argues that women should enjoy the same rights as men. Feminist theory was useful in this study as it provided a framework for socio-economic gender issues affecting women's participation in alpine tourism.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive research design, and data was collected through structured closed-ended questionnaires distributed to women participating in alpine tourism activities. Structured interviews were conducted with the officials of Kenya Wildlife Service and the leaders of Mt. Kenya Guides and Porters Association. The target population of the study was 200 women involved in alpine tourism activities. According to Nyeri county department of Trade, Tourism, culture and Cooperative development statistics (2021), there are over 2000 mountain guides and porters with 1200 having been licensed by KWS to participate in alpine tourism activities of which

200 are women. Yamane's (1973) sample size formula at 95% confidence level p -value = 0.05 as used by Mutana and Mukwanda (2020) was used to compute the sample size of 133 women participating in alpine tourism activities.

Yamane's formula

Whereby, n -sample size; N -the population size; e -the acceptance sampling error

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

$$\frac{200}{1+200(0.05^2)} = 133$$

Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis, and quantitative data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study involved a sample size of 133 women actively engaged in Alpine Tourism activities within Mt. Kenya National Park. From the distributed questionnaires, 107 were successfully filled and returned, indicating a response rate of 80.4%. A response rate of 50% and above is deemed adequate for drawing meaningful conclusions (Field, 2013). The study response rate, therefore, was sufficient for drawing conclusions in the study. On the age distribution, the study found that the majority of the respondents were within the age range of 30-38, accounting for 52.3% of the participants. Those in the age range of 21-29 and 39-47 comprised 29.9% and 17.8% of the respondents, respectively. These findings provide insights into the age distribution of women actively engaged in alpine tourism within Mt. Kenya National Park, allowing for a better understanding of the age demographics of the participants.

On the role distribution, the study found that the majority of the participants were actively engaged as porters, constituting a significant proportion of the workforce at 60.7%. Assistant guides and cooks also played integral roles, representing 13.1% and 16.8% of the respondents, respectively. Lead guides, although fewer in number at 9.3%, also contributed significantly to

the functioning of alpine Tourism activities in the park. The study also sought to establish the duration of work that each of the respondents had in their respective fields, and the findings demonstrated that 29.9% of the respondents reported having 6-10 years of experience, representing a significant segment of the workforce with substantial expertise. Additionally, 28.9% of the participants indicated 1-5 years of experience, suggesting the presence of a considerable number of individuals relatively new to the industry. Moreover, 24.3% of the respondents had 11-15 years of experience, showcasing a significant portion of seasoned professionals. Furthermore, 12.2% of the participants reported 16-20 years of experience, highlighting a group of highly experienced individuals within the workforce. A smaller cohort, comprising 4.7% of the participants, indicated having over 21 years of experience, reflecting the presence of exceptionally tenured professionals in the sector.

On the marital status of women participating in alpine tourism activities, the study found that the majority of the respondents, accounting for 62.6%, were single, 24.3% were married, and 13.1% of the participants were divorced. In addition, on the level of education, the study found that a substantial proportion of the respondents, 48.6%, had attained a high school level of education. Nearly a fifth of the participants, 19.6%, had completed their primary education, while 15.9% had acquired education at both the university and tertiary levels, respectively. Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

The study sought to establish the impact of various factors on women's participation in Alpine Tourism in Mt. Kenya National Park, and the findings in *Table 1* below show the extent to which female mountain crew agreed or disagreed with the given statement on women's participation in alpine tourism. The results revealed that 93.5% of the respondents agreed that women worked as guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya to earn income to support their families. This implied that

the majority of the women who took part in alpine tourism were driven by the need to contribute to their households' financial stability. The findings of this study are supported by Prnil (2016) who points out that there is potentially an economic importance for alpine tourism to open door for women and to provide additional income to help support their families. In addition, 48.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement concerning women working to disprove the belief that women were devoted to their caregiving responsibilities and could not perform better than men in mountaineering. This implied that the respondents are aware of gender-biased stereotypes relating to outdoor activities like mountaineering and are determined to participate in alpine tourism activities to challenge the existing gender norm regarding the role they can play in mountaineering. Similarly, the study findings concur to Welbourne (2009) findings on gender stereotyping. Welbourne stated that it is assumed that women cannot devote themselves to their alpine tourism work because they are devoted to their caregiving responsibilities. Therefore, they are treated with mistrust regarding their ability to undertake guiding or portering duties.

Moreover, 85.1% of the respondents acknowledged that women worked as guides in Mt. Kenya to gain experience in their guiding careers. This implied that the majority of the respondents recognised the importance of enhancing professional development and hands-on skill acquisition as motivating factors for women's involvement in alpine tourism, emphasising the importance of creating avenues for career growth and skill enhancement within the sector to encourage greater female participation and involvement in leadership. The findings concur to (Martinoia, 2013) findings who pointed out that women in Nepal participate in alpine tourism activities to advance their guiding career. The study further revealed that 89.7% of the respondents agreed with the statement that women work as guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya to avoid reliance on their husbands to provide for the family. This implied that the majority of the women who participated in alpine

tourism recognised the role of the industry as a means to establish financial autonomy and reduce dependency within a family structure. The findings are supported by (Mohanty, 2018) study findings that women participate in alpine tourism activities so that they can be independent and contribute towards family development.

Interview Findings on Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

The study interviewed 4 officials from the Mt. Kenya Guides and Porters Association and 3 Kenya Wildlife Service officials to gain insights into women's participation in alpine tourism in the region. The interview findings demonstrated that women participate in alpine tourism activities to earn income to support their families and also achieve financial independence. In addition, women participate in alpine tourism activities to challenge the gender norms that women are only devoted to their caregiving responsibilities and that they can't do better than men in outdoor activities like mountaineering.

The findings of this study are supported by Prnil (2016) who points out that there is potentially an economic importance for alpine tourism to open door for women and to provide additional income to help support their families. Similarly, the study findings concur to Welbourne (2009) findings on gender stereotyping. Welbourne stated that it is assumed that women cannot devote themselves to their alpine tourism work because they are devoted to their caregiving responsibilities. Therefore, they are treated with mistrust regarding their ability to undertake guiding or portering duties.

Social Gender Issues Affecting Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

The study sought to identify the influence of social gender issues on women's participation in Alpine Tourism in Mt. Kenya National Park. The findings presented in *Table 2* below provide an overview of the participants' perspectives on various social dynamics that were provided in the data collection tool. The study revealed that 93.4% of the respondents agreed that women who

are working as guides in Mt. Kenya have completed primary and secondary education and graduated from tertiary institutions. This showed that the educational qualifications of women guides were perceived positively by a substantial proportion of the respondents. These findings are in line with those of (Momsen, 2014) who pointed out that women with better education in Nepal were guides and those who didn't do well in school or never went beyond secondary education were porters or cooks.

Moreover, for the statement indicating that women working as porters and cooks in Mt. Kenya never went beyond secondary education, 47.7% of the respondents agreed. This demonstrated that the educational attainment of women in these supportive roles was perceived less favourably compared to women in guiding positions. These findings are in line with those of (Momsen, 2014) who observed that educational disparities influence job roles in alpine tourism sector. Additionally, regarding the marital status of female guides, the study found that 52.3% of the respondents disagreed that the majority of female guides in Mt. Kenya were married. This suggested that a significant proportion of the respondents perceived unmarried status as a prevalent characteristic among women in guiding roles in Mt. Kenya.

The study further revealed that 45.8% of the respondents disagreed that many women porters and cooks in Mt. Kenya were married. This indicated that the perception of married status among women in supporting roles was not widely held by the respondents. The findings of this study align with the findings of (Kiray, 2019), highlighting the impact of marital status on women's roles and responsibilities in the alpine tourism sector. Moreover, for the statement highlighting the conflict experienced by married women working as guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya when balancing work and family responsibilities, 86.9% of the respondents agreed. This illustrated that the challenge of work-family balance was recognised as a significant issue among women participating in alpine tourism

activities. The findings are supported by (Johnson, 2011) findings that division of attention between family responsibilities and alpine tourism activities leads to conflicts with employers. Additionally, 88.8% of the respondents agreed that a significant number of female guides, porters and cooks working in Mt. Kenya were single. This highlighted the prevalence of single individuals among women in guiding and support roles. The findings concur to (Kiray, 2019) findings emphasizing that alpine tourism predominantly consists of a single female workforce. Moreover, for the statement regarding the ease of working in the mountain for single female guides, porters, and cooks, 85.1% of the respondents agreed. This suggested that single women in these roles perceived their work environment positively since they have minimal demands, unlike married female mountain crew who face challenges when balancing work and family responsibilities as they face demands from their husbands, children and work, which brings divided attention when working. This observation is consistent with the findings of (Kiray, 2019) who pointed out that single women often express reluctance of getting married, fearing it might affect their full participation in alpine tourism activities.

Furthermore, the study found that 88.7% of the respondents agreed that women working as guides in Mt. Kenya were proficient in the English language. This emphasised the importance of language skills in the role of a guide. However, the study revealed that 50.5% of the respondents agreed that female porters and cooks working in Mt. Kenya were not proficient in the English language. This highlighted potential language barriers faced by individuals in these support roles. These findings concur to (Lawi, 2017) findings who pointed out that language proficiency played a crucial role in determining roles, with an individual's ability to speak English language influencing their assigned responsibilities. Additionally, for the statement concerning the requirement for self-confidence among women guides, porters and cooks in Mt. Kenya to attend to client's needs and expectations, 91.6% of the respondents agreed. This

emphasised the importance of self-assurance in these roles as the work requires one to summit the mountain, which at times comes with challenges like altitude sickness. The importance of self-confidence in marginalized groups was further highlighted by (Azman, 2016), emphasizing its role in encouraging participation and success in various sectors, including alpine tourism.

The study also found that 87.8% of the respondents agreed that women guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya experienced discrimination while participating in mountaineering. This highlighted the prevalence of discriminatory practices in the alpine tourism industry. These findings align with the experiences reported by women in alpine tourism, as described by (Jackson, 2019), emphasizing the existing challenges and disparities faced by women in the field. The study further revealed that 85.1% of the respondents agreed that female mountain crew are victims of sexual harassment in the mountains. This highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment within the work environment for women participating in alpine tourism activities. The prevalence of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace was further supported by a national study (Kearl, 2019), emphasizing the urgent need for measures to address these concerning trends.

Interview Findings on Social Gender Issues Affecting Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

Based on discussions with 4 informants from the Mt. Kenya Guides and Porters Association and 3 Kenya Wildlife Service officials, insights were provided on various social gender issues affecting women's participation in alpine tourism in the region. The interview findings indicated that a significant number of women working as guides have graduated from tertiary institutions and most porters possess high school qualification with only a small percentage having pursued higher education and the mountain crew receive on the job-training to improve on their educational background.

The findings also highlighted that guides are generally more proficient in English language than porters and cooks as English language proficiency allows mountain crew to communicate with clients and provide them with relevant information around the region which helps in achieving customer satisfaction and enhancing the overall tourist experience.

In addition, a handful of female mountain crew are married with majority of them being single an indication that alpine tourism work favours the singles. The findings also demonstrated that guides, porters and cooks demonstrate self-confidence when attending to client's needs and expectations of summiting the mountain which at times comes with challenges like altitude sickness and even death. Furthermore, gender discrimination and sexual harassment cases are prevalent in the mountain against the female mountain crew but the porters and guides association has been implementing policies such as deregistering from association, revoking of licences and charging in a court of law those who are found promoting sexual harassment in alpine tourism sector.

The study findings corroborate to the assertions of Momsen (2014) where it was noticeable in Nepal that women with better education were guides and those who didn't do well in school or never went beyond secondary education were porters or cooks. The findings are also in agreement with Kiray (2019) study findings where it was evident in Nepal that women who had good command of the English language were guides and those who could not speak English fluently were porters or cooks. In addition, the findings are also supported by Kiray (2019) study findings that Alpine tourism is characterized by a workforce consisting of women who majority are singles.

Furthermore, Azman (2016) pointed out that having self-confidence can help women face and address some of the challenges that may come their way while participating in alpine tourism activities which is line with this study findings. Gender discrimination and sexual harassment as revealed by the findings of the study are supported

by Jackson (2019) assertions that women are the ones who are more prone to gender discrimination and sexual harassment which continues to affect them from fully participating in alpine tourism activities

Economic Gender Issues Affecting Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

The study sought to assess how economic gender issues influence women's participation in Alpine Tourism in Mt. Kenya National Park, and the results presented in *Table 3* below revealed that 86.92% of the respondents agreed that female guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya receive low pay when compared to their male counterparts. This highlighted the potential disparity in wages between men and women in alpine tourism, emphasising the existence of gender-based wage inequality. This observation is consistent with the findings of (Sánchez-Ollero, 2017), which emphasize the impact of sociological and cultural factors on wage discrepancies.

Additionally, it was found that 40.19% of the respondents agreed that women guides, porters and cooks working in Mt. Kenya often work for long hours. This underscored the demanding nature of their roles, potentially contributing to challenges related to work-life balance. Moreover, the study revealed that 33.64% of the respondents agreed that women guides, porters and cooks in Mt. Kenya sometimes quit their jobs due to the long working hours involved. This highlighted the potential impact of strenuous work schedules on the retention of women in the alpine tourism workforce. This sentiment is supported by the research of (Kusluvan, 2020), which discusses the factors contributing to job dissatisfaction among female guides, porters and cooks.

Furthermore, for the statement suggesting that women guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya enter into formal contracts with their employers before participating in mountaineering, only 8.41% of the respondents agreed. This indicated the prevalence of informal employment arrangements within the alpine tourism workforce. This viewpoint is consistent with the

principles outlined by (Williams, 2017), which advocate for gender-inclusive policies to protect the rights of women in the alpine tourism workforce.

Moreover, the study indicated that 88.78 % of the respondents agreed that female guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya often negotiate the wages they receive by word of mouth without entering into formal contracts with their employers. This emphasised the prevalence of informal wage negotiations in the absence of structured employment agreements. This perspective aligns with the findings of (Visser, 2015), which underscore the challenges faced by female guides, porters and cooks and the importance of fair employment practices in the industry. The data further revealed that 85.98% of the respondents agreed that women guides, porters, and cooks with land often participate in mountaineering to supplement the income they receive from trading in farm commodities. This underscored the significance of alpine tourism as an additional source of income for women with land, potentially contributing to their economic resilience. This observation is in line with the research of (Nassani, 2019), which highlights the interdependence of agricultural and tourism activities for women in rural areas.

Interview Findings on Economic Gender Issues Affecting Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

Incorporating the informative insights provided by the 4 informants from the Mt. Kenya Guides and Porters Association and 3 Kenya Wildlife Service officials, the qualitative analysis of economic gender issues affecting women's participation in alpine tourism shed light on crucial aspects.

The interview findings indicated that economic gender issues like wage disparity, long working hours, terms of employment and access to land affects women participation in alpine tourism. The issues of wage gap perpetuates existing gender inequalities within alpine tourism sector making it challenging for female mountain crew to achieve financial stability. The findings also

highlighted that women often work extended hours because of the strenuous requirements of summiting Mt. Kenya such as navigating difficult terrain and addressing needs and expectations of tourists.

In addition, the interview findings demonstrated that porters and cooks who forms part of the mountain crew work without the security of a formal contract which exposes them to uncertainties and vulnerabilities like lack of job security, health insurance benefits and leave benefits. The findings also indicated that women with land engage in alpine tourism activities to supplement income earned from trading in farm commodities and there is the need to support women to participate in mountaineering so that they can be economically empowered.

The findings of this study are supported by Gonzalez (2014) study findings which suggested that men are understood to be the ones who have to provide financially for their families, while women work to supplement their husband's salary hence women receiving less pay than men in alpine tourism sector. As stated by Kusluvan (2020) and acceded to by the interview findings, a considerable number of guides, porters and cooks work very many hours with low remuneration and very little legal protection because they do not have permanent positions.

Similarly, the study findings concur to Rogerson (2018) study findings that Porters and cooks often negotiate terms of work by word of mouth like the wages per day if they find a tour company to hire them without the security of a formal contract. In addition, as articulated by Nassani (2019) and supported by interview findings, women participating in alpine tourism are forced to supplement the income they get from working as guides, porters and cooks with on farm related activities and trading on farm commodities especially during the low season in the mountain.

Table 1: Women participation in Alpine tourism

Women Participation in Alpine Tourism	SD	D	AA	A	SA	Mean	StD
Women work as guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya to earn income to support their families	0 (0.0)	1 (0.9)	6 (5.6)	37 (34.6)	63 (58.9)	4.514	0.650
Women work as guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya to disprove the belief that women are devoted to their caregiving responsibilities and they cannot do better than men in mountaineering	4 (3.7)	9 (8.4)	18 (16.8)	52 (48.6)	24 (22.4)	3.776	1.012
Women work as guides in Mt. Kenya to gain experience in their guiding career	0 (0.0)	5 (4.7)	11 (10.3)	45 (42.1)	46 (43)	4.234	0.819
Women work as guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya to avoid reliance on their husbands to provide for the family	2 (1.9)	2 (1.9)	7 (6.5)	49 (45.8)	47 (43.9)	4.280	0.822

KEY: SD: Strongly Disagree: D: Disagree: AA: Averagely Agree: A: Agree: SA: Strongly Agree

Table 2: Social gender issues

Social Gender Issues	SD	D	AA	A	SA	Mean	StD
Women who are working as guides in Mt. Kenya have completed primary and secondary education and graduated from tertiary institutions	0 (0.0)	1 (0.9)	6 (5.6)	39 (36.4)	61 (57)	4.495	0.650
Women working as porters and cooks in Mt. Kenya never went beyond secondary education	2 (1.9)	11 (10.3)	19 (17.8)	51 (47.7)	24 (22.4)	3.785	0.972
The majority of women guides who are working in Mt. Kenya are married	22 (20.6)	56 (52.3)	19 (17.8)	8 (7.5)	2 (1.9)	2.178	0.909
Many women porters and cooks in Mt Kenya are married	31 (29.0)	49 (45.8)	15 (14)	6 (5.6)	5 (4.7)	2.104	1.041
Married women working as guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya experience conflict with their employers when balancing work and family responsibilities	4 (3.7)	7 (6.5)	3 (2.8)	38 (35.5)	55 (51.4)	4.243	1.045
A significant number of female guides, porters and cooks working in Mt Kenya are single	1 (0.9)	5 (4.7)	6 (5.6)	40 (37.4)	55 (51.4)	4.336	0.857
Female guides, porters and cooks are at ease working in the mountains when single	3 (2.8)	4 (3.7)	9 (8.4)	46 (43)	45 (42.1)	4.178	0.940
Women working in Mt. Kenya as guides are proficient in the English language	1 (0.9)	6 (5.6)	5 (4.7)	39 (36.4)	56 (52.3)	4.336	0.879
Female porters and cooks working in Mt Kenya are not proficient in the English language	6 (5.6)	24 (22.4)	23 (21.5)	37 (34.6)	17 (15.9)	3.327	1.156
For women to work as guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya, they must have self-confidence to be able to attend to clients' needs and expectations	1 (0.9)	1 (0.9)	7 (6.5)	51 (47.7)	47 (43.9)	4.327	0.724

Social Gender Issues	SD	D	AA	A	SA	Mean	StD
Women guides, porters and cooks in Mt. Kenya experience discrimination while participating in mountaineering	2 (1.9)	3 (2.8)	8 (7.5)	44 (41.1)	50 (46.7)	4.280	0.867
Female mountain crew are victims of sexual harassment in the mountain	2 (1.9)	5 (4.7)	9 (8.4)	42 (39.3)	49 (45.8)	4.224	0.925

KEY: SD: Strongly Disagree: D: Disagree: AA: Averagely Agree: A: Agree: SA: Strongly Agree

Table 3: Economic gender issues

Economic gender issues	SD	D	AA	A	SA	Mean	StD
Female guides, porters and cooks in Mt. Kenya receive low pay when compared to male guides and porters	1 (0.93)	8 (7.48)	5 (4.67)	34 (31.78)	59 (55.14)	4.327	0.939
Women guides, porters and cooks working in Mt. Kenya work for long hours	7 (6.54)	10 (9.35)	24 (22.43)	43 (40.19)	23 (21.50)	3.608	1.122
Women guides, porters and cooks in Mt. Kenya quit their jobs due to long working hours	10 (9.35)	14 (13.08)	26 (24.30)	36 (33.64)	21 (19.63)	3.411	1.213
Women guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya enter a formal contract with their employers before participating in mountaineering	35 (32.71)	59 (55.14)	4 (3.74)	4 (3.74)	5 (4.67)	1.925	0.968
Female guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya fairly negotiate the wages they receive by word of mouth without entering a formal contract with their employers	2 (1.87)	5 (4.67)	5 (4.67)	40 (37.38)	55 (51.40)	4.318	0.907
Mt. Kenya Women guides, porters, and cooks with land participate in mountaineering to supplement the income they get from trading in farm commodities	1 (0.93)	4 (3.74)	10 (9.35)	51 (47.66)	41 (38.32)	4.187	0.826
Women guides, porters, and cooks without land are forced to engage in mountaineering since it is the only option available for them to earn a living	10 (9.35)	46 (42.99)	23 (21.50)	14 (13.08)	14 (13.08)	2.776	1.192

KEY: SD: Strongly Disagree: D: Disagree: AA: Averagely Agree: A: Agree: SA: Strongly Agree

Relationship between Social Gender Issues and Women Participation in Alpine Tourism

The study sought to test the relationship between Social Gender Issues and Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism within Mt. Kenya National Park. From regression results shown in *Table 4* below, the

coefficient of determination, denoted as R-squared (R^2), was computed at 0.381. This value suggests that approximately 38.1% of the variation in women's participation in Alpine Tourism within the context of Mt. Kenya National Park can be explained by social gender issues when all other factors are held constant.

Table 4: Social gender issues model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.495 ^a	0.381	0.292	0.45956

a. Predictors: (Constant) Social Gender Issues

b. Dependent Variable: Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

The results of the analysis of variance in *Table 5* below indicated that the model was significant at p-value 0.044, which is less than 0.05 with the F ratio =4.162. The ANOVA findings suggest a significant relationship ($F=4.162$, $P < 0.05$) between Social

Gender Issues and Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism, highlighting the meaningful influence of Social Gender Issues on the participation of women in Alpine Tourism activities within the park.

Table 5: Social gender issues Anova

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	0.879	1	0.879	4.162	0.044 ^b
Residual	22.176	105	0.211		
Total	23.055	106			

a. Dependent Variable: Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Gender Issues

As shown in *Table 6* below for the coefficients of the model, the variable of social gender issues exhibits a positive impact on Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism ($\beta = 0.195$, $p < 0.05$). The corresponding linear regression model can be expressed as follows: Women Participation in Alpine Tourism (Y) = $3.136 + 0.279X_1 + e$ where

3.136 represents the constant, 0.279 represents the unstandardised coefficient for Social Gender Issues, and e represents the error term. This suggests that Social Gender Issues have a meaningful and statistically significant effect on the participation of women in Alpine Tourism within the context of the Mt. Kenya National Park

Table 6: Social gender issues coefficients

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1 (Constant)	3.136	0.524		5.989	0.000
Social Gender Issues	0.279	0.137	0.195	2.040	0.044

a. Dependent Variable: Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

Relationship between Economic Gender Issues and Women Participation in Alpine Tourism

The study further sought to test the relationship between economic gender issues and women's participation in alpine tourism. As shown in *Table 7*

below, R-squared (R^2) was calculated to be 0.381. This value suggests that approximately 38.1% of the variance in women's participation in Alpine Tourism within the Mt. Kenya National Park can be attributed to economic gender issues, with other factors held constant.

Table 7: Economic gender issues model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.590 ^a	0.381	0.221	0.46669

a. Predictors: (Constant), Economic Gender Issues

b. Dependent Variable: Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

The analysis of variance in *Table 8* below indicated that the model was significant at p-value 0.048, which is less than 0.05 with the F ratio=0.854. The ANOVA results suggest a moderate relationship (F=0.854, $P < 0.05$) between Economic Gender

Issues and Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism, indicating a modest influence of Economic Gender Issues on the participation of women in alpine tourism activities within the park.

Table 8: Economic Gender Issues Anova

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	0.186	1	0.186	0.854	0.048 ^b
Residual	22.869	105	0.218		
Total	23.055	106			

a. Dependent Variable: Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Economic Gender Issues

As for the coefficient of the model shown in *Table 9* below, the variable of economic gender issues demonstrates a moderate positive impact on women's participation in Alpine Tourism ($\beta = 3.847$, $p < 0.05$). The corresponding linear regression model can be expressed as follows: women participation in Alpine Tourism (Y) = $3.847 + 0.101X_3 + e$, where 3.847 denotes the

constant, 0.101 signifies the unstandardised coefficient for Economic Gender Issues, and e denotes the error term. This suggests that Economic Gender Issues have a limited but statistically significant effect on the participation of women in Alpine Tourism within the context of the Mt. Kenya National Park.

Table 9: Economic Gender Issues Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.847	0.386		9.973	0.000
Economic Gender Issues	0.101	0.109	0.090	0.924	0.048

a. Dependent Variable: Women's Participation in Alpine Tourism

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn from the discussions of findings: Women working as guides

in Mt. Kenya generally possess educational qualifications up to the tertiary level, indicating their strong educational background, while women working as porters and cooks in the region typically

complete their education at the secondary level. Additionally, the research established that the majority of female mountain crew were unmarried, highlighting the diverse marital status within the workforce.

It was further concluded that married women face challenges balancing work and family responsibilities, while unmarried female guides, porters and cooks are able to focus on the job since they have minimal demands, unlike married women who face demands from their husband, children, and the work they are doing which brings a challenge to them while executing their duties. Moreover, the study concluded that women working as guides demonstrate a strong command of the English language, while female porters and cooks generally exhibit limited proficiency in the English language.

The study further concluded that the gender wage gap persists in the alpine tourism sector as female guides, porters, and cooks in Mt. Kenya consistently receive lower pay than their male counterparts, indicating existing inequalities in the industry. Moreover, the research concluded that while some women in the industry formalise their employment through contractual agreements, many negotiate their wages informally, exposing them to exploitation. Additionally, it was determined that the participation of women with and without land in mountaineering activities serves as a significant source of income, either as supplementary earnings from farming or as the sole means of livelihood, further emphasising the critical role of alpine tourism in the economic sustenance of the local community.

Recommendations of the Study

Policy Recommendations

In view of the study's outcomes and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed for policymakers and stakeholders:

- Implement policies that promote gender equality in the workplace, ensuring equal

opportunities for women to engage in alpine tourism activities such as guiding, portering and cooking. This can be achieved through affirmative action programs and gender-sensitive hiring policies to encourage the participation of women in the alpine tourism sector. Any tour company or mountain crew association should be fined if they hire only men to work as guides, porters, and cooks and also if they fail to observe the two-third gender rule in leadership positions.

- Develop family-friendly policies which enable married women to fully participate in alpine tourism activities without compromising their family duties. This can include policies touching on the creation of social networks like day-care and spousal support for married women to entrust their children to enable them to participate in alpine tourism activities.
- Advocate for the implementation of comprehensive anti-discrimination policies and protocols within the alpine tourism sector to safeguard the rights and dignity of female guides, porters, and cooks. This can include awareness campaigns and strict enforcement measures to prevent and address discriminatory practices and behaviours.

Recommendations for Practice

There is a need for the Nyeri County Department of Tourism, Trade, Culture and Cooperative Development in partnership with Mt. Kenya Guides and Porters Association, to organise short course training on mountaineering and capacity-building programs to enhance the English language proficiency of female porters and cooks, thereby improving their communication skills and enabling them to interact more effectively with tourists.

There is also a need for Mt. Kenya Guides and Porters Association to undertake a sensitisation forum for its members about sexual harassment subjected to female mountain crew by men

participating in alpine tourism activities and issue strict disciplinary actions such as perpetrators being deregistered from the association and prosecution in a court of law. This will go a long way in ensuring a secure and respectful working environment for women participating in alpine tourism activities.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the study's results and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed for future research:

- The research found out that the majority of women participating in alpine tourism activities come from around Mt. Kenya, and a study can be done in other counties bordering Mt. Kenya to establish if the same is happening in other regions.
- Future researchers can also consider investigating if there are scenarios where women who are far from the mountain participate in mountaineering and establish motivating factors behind their participation in alpine tourism activities.

REFERENCES

- Azman, H. (2016). Implementation and Challenges of English Language Education Reform in Malaysian Primary Schools. *Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 22(3), 20-33.
- Beedie, P. (2018). *Mountain Guiding and Adventure Tourism*. London: Routledge.
- Burton, C. (2014). *Subordination: Feminism and Social Theory*. United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics*. sage
- Gondalez, L. (2014). Becoming mothers and fathers: parenthood, gender and the division of labour. *journal of gender and society*, 11(6), 747-772.
- Grandon, R. (2007). *Nepalese Tourism Challenges*. New Delhi: Mehta Press.
- Hazel, M. (2020). *Background information on Kilimanjaro*. Retrieved from <http://climbmountkilimajaro.com>
- Jackson. (2019). Gender based discrimination appointments, promotions and remunerations; views of south africa manager. *South Africa Journal of Labour Relations*, 38(2), 48-60.
- Johnson, Z. (2011). Experience with Queen Bees: A South African Study Exploring the Reluctance of Women Executives to Promote other Women in the Workplace. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 42(4), 47-55.
- Joseph, S. (2016). Mountain Tourism in Dynamic Settings: Challenges and efforts to align tourism emerging realities in Mount Kenya. Retrieved from <http://books.openedition.org/africae/1348>.
- Kearl, H. (2019, February 19). *MeToo*. Retrieved from [stop street harassment: http://www.stopstreetharassment.org](http://www.stopstreetharassment.org)
- Kiray, E. (2019). *Social Campaign for gender-related issues in Turkey*. Turkey: Izmir University of Economics.
- Kusluvan, H. (2020). *The impact of occupational stigma consciousness of undergraduate tourism management students on occupational commitment*. Istanbul: Social Science Institute of Istanbul University.
- Lawi, P. (2017). English Language Proficiency Standards aligned with Content Standards. *Educational Researcher*, 47(4), 313-350.
- Logan, J. (2016). *The Democratization and Feminization of Adventure on Aconcagua*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Martinoia, R. (2013). Women's mounatineering and dissonances within the mounatin guide profession. *journal of Alpine Research*, 23(2), 101-120.

- Marinel, M. (2021, January 29). *The Fight for Workforce Equity on Kilimanjaro*. Retrieved from <http://www.alpinist.com>
- Mohanty, P. (2018). Women at work: exploring the issues and challenges of women employees on travel and tourism. *Indian Journal of Economics and Development*, 6(1), 1-5.
- Momsen, J. (2014). *Gender and development*. London: Routledge.
- Mutan, S., and Mukwanda, G. (2020). An Exploratory Assessment of Significant Tourism Sustainability Indicators for a Montane-Based Route in the Drankesberg Mountains. *Journal of Sustainability*, 12-20.
- Nasani, A. (2019). The impact of tourism and finance on women empowerment. *Journal of Policy Modelling*, 41(20), 234-254.
- Pranil, K. (2016). *Contribution of International Organization and Agencies in the Development of Tourism in Nepal*. London: Routledge.
- Rogerson, C. (2018). Tourism and transformation: small enterprise development in South Africa. *Africa Insight*, 33(1), 108-115.
- Sanchez-Ollero, J. (2017). Impact of personal and labour factors in hospitality wages. *Cuadernos de Turismo*, 39(39), 417-436.
- Visser, M. (2015). Mountain Tourism and second home tourism. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 485-500.
- Welbourne. (2009). Women "take care" men "take charge" Manager's stereotypic perceptions of women and leaders. *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*, 12(1), 25-49.
- Williams, P. (2017). Skiing constraints for women. *Journal of Travel Research*, 33(1), 21-2.