

**VISITOR'S PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE CAUSES OF SEASONALITY IN
THE KENYAN TOURISM INDUSTRY: A CASE OF NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK,
KENYA.**

Kambaga Dunstan¹, Mongare Omare².

¹Technical University of Kenya, School of Business and Management Studies,
Department of Business and Management Studies,
P.O. Box 52428-00200, Nairobi ; Tel. : +254722314530.
Email: Kambaga@tuk.ac.ke/ okambaga@gmail.com

²Kisii University, School of Business and Economics,
Department of Tourism and Hospitality,
P.O. Box 408, Kisii; Tel.: +254721556906.
Email: mongareomare@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: Email; kambaga@tuKenya.ac.ke / okambaga@gmail.com

Mobile number; +254733340411

The paper has not been published

ABSTRACT

Seasonality presents a number of issues that require special attention and strategies. In particular, seasonality affects the number of tourists to a region and therefore may threaten the viability of tourism enterprises and regions whether severely or mildly. Seasonality causes the fluctuation in tourists and visitor numbers to a destination. Consequently, some destinations at certain times have more tourists and visitors than they are able to accommodate, while other have few tourists and visitors to the region. Kenyan tourism industry has in recent years suffered low tourist receipts especially at the coast. The main objective is to establish the visitor's perceptions towards the causes of seasonality in the Kenyan tourism industry, specifically, the causes of seasonality at the Nairobi National Park (NNP). The target visitor population at the NNP was 448 visitors for August, 2017, (KWS, 2018). The formula by Miller and Brewer (2003) was used to get the sample size of 205 respondents. Data was collected

using questionnaires and interviews, then cleaned, edited and analyzed. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data, while qualitative data was analysed by use of content analysis. Descriptive analysis test used means, percentages and frequency distributions and charts. Inferential analysis used correlation and regression analysis including ANOVA and X2-square test to establish the level of relationships between the research variables. The findings indicate that the NNP experiences seasonality. Out of 64 respondent's majority strongly agreed both natural and institutional seasonality that weather season both natural and institutionalized seasonality account for 80%; Calendar influence, natural and institutionalized seasonality 51%; Timing decision, natural and institutionalized seasonality 77% finally, Social pressures, natural and institutionally seasonality 50%. All the predictors were statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$ since p-values are less than 0.05. The study recommends that the government to give incentives to domestic tourists to visit the park regularly, in order to reduce the negativity of institutionalized seasonality. Further studies be done on the strategies to mitigate the causes of seasonality at the NNP.

Keywords: Tourism, Tourists, Seasonality, Nairobi National Park

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the world's biggest and the fastest growing industry in the world with potential economic returns from the sector. According to Buttler (2004), seasonality is a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure, and traffic on high ways and other forms of transportations, employment and admissions of attractions.

Seasonality causes the fluctuation in tourists and visitor numbers to a destination. Therefore, some destinations at certain times have more tourists and visitors than others. Bar-on (2005), came up with ways of measuring seasonality by use of the number of visitor arrivals, departures, and number of visitors staying. Although, seasonality is widely perceived in a negative light because it is linked with a reduction of tourist revenues.

According to GOK 2019, tourism sector registered an improved performance in 2018 compared to 2017. The number of international visitor arrivals increased from 1,778.4 thousand in 2017

to 2,027.7 in 2018. The improved was due to stable political environment, concerted marketing efforts such as branding of tourism products, digital marketing and global, withdrawal of travel advisories from foreign countries, improved security across the country especially from Al-shaabab and investor confidence in the management of both macro and microeconomic development. Visitors to national parks and game reserves rose by 20.3 per cent to 2,868.9 thousand. According to KWS (2018), Nairobi National Park (NNP) in 2017, registered 154,495, which was an impressive increase from previous years. The overall, tourism earnings rose from KSh 119.9 billion in 2017 to KSh 157.4 billion in 2018.

The Concept Seasonality

Seasonality can be categorized into two namely, Natural category which involves regular temporal variations in natural phenomena, including differences patterns in temperature, rainfall and snowfall, sunlight and daylight. Institutional category which forms seasonality caused by human actions and policies e.g. religious, cultural ethnic and social factors of human's activities (Osborn, 2002). The seasonality phenomena of tourism affect all aspects of supply-demand activities; pricing, occupancy, human resource, supplies volume, offered activities and available attractions (Butler, 2004).

Kenya's Tourism Sector

According to the Ministry of Tourism report (2012), tourism is Kenya's third largest foreign exchange earner after tea and horticulture, and a major employer, accounting for 9% of the total wage employment. It contributes about 11% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Kenya's tourism greatly depends on its wilderness and wildlife, which are all under threat from global climate change. The main tourist attractions are photo safaris through the 19 national parks and game reserves (Mogaka and Barrow 2007).

Kenya Tourism Board describes Kenya as having 13hrs of daylight and consistently warm temperatures year round. Most visitors avoid visiting during the long rainy season in April and May; January and February are mostly warm and are good months to visit; High season being June to September; Low season from April to May, November to December; shoulder season January to March, October. Table 1 shows the number of visitors to Kenya 2015 to 2018 (GOK, 2019).

Table.1: International Visitor Arrivals and the Purpose of Visit, 2014-2018 ('000)

Quarter	Purpose	2015	2016	2017	2018*
1st Qtr.	Holiday	241.8	280.0	306.1	350.4
	Business.....	47.6	50.2	70.6	62.1
	Transit.....	20.9	20.5	25.5	26.0
	Other.....	27.0	33.0	21.4	35.1
TOTAL.		337.3	383.7	423.7	473.5
2nd Qtr.	Holiday.....	224.1	248.8	280.8	315.2
	Business.....	55.4	56.3	64.9	56.6
	Transit.....	18.7	23.0	43.8	24.8
	Other.....	40.0	39.8	33.3	53.0
TOTAL.		338.3	367.8	422.7	449.6
3rd Qtr.	Holiday	296.6	355.5	335.0	446.1
	Business.....	47.7	68.2	63.1	80.6
	Transit	25.1	22.2	18.7	22.6
	Other.....	43.5	45.5	77.7	50.4
TOTAL.		412.9	491.3	494.4	599.7
4th Qtr.	Holiday	280.7	312.6	296.0	386.1
	Business.....	45.5	49.3	46.1	57.9
	Transit	17.4	23.2	16.9	23.6
	Other	27.4	38.0	78.8	37.3
TOTAL.		371.0	423.2	437.6	504.9
Annual	Holiday.....	1,043.2	1,196.8	1,217.8	1,497.7
	Business.....	196.2	224.0	244.7	257.2
	Transit.....	82.0	88.9	104.8	97.1
	Other.....	138.0	156.3	211.2	175.8
TOTAL.		1,459.5	1,666.0	1,778.4	2,027.7

(GOK, 2019)

* Provisional; " Others " category includes: Medical, Religious Mission/Volunteer, Sports, Health, Study, Visiting Friends and Relatives, Others /Not Stated.

The third quarter of the year tends to have more tourists due to the high volume of vacationing tourists from around the world and also the time for the great wildebeest migration, 2 million wildebeests and zebras migrate from Northern Tanzania into the Maasai Mara. The low season

is usually for low budget tourists when there are low tariffs for accommodation, road transport and airlines. Most hotels and lodges have special offers/discounts which are usually very appealing.

Nairobi National Park (NNP)

According to Kenya Wildlife Service (2018), NNP is the Kenya’s oldest national park and the first to be established in East Africa with a variety of attractions; natural wilderness, wildlife and over 400 species of birds. According to Richard Bagine (2003), NNP was gazetted in 1946. Seasonality causes the fluctuation in tourists and visitor numbers to the park (Table 2). Therefore, at certain times it has more tourists and visitors than they are able to accommodate, while at other times, there are too few tourists and visitors. According to Matiku (2015), NNP is not very much affected due to its proximity from the capital and therefore receives a lot of domestic tourists (Table 2) annually.

Table 2: Number of Visitors to Nairobi National Park (NNP)

Citizens													
Year	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2015	77142	6000	5011	5836	6702	5061	5422	7419	8422	5569	6181	5116	10403
2016	81721	7449	4438	8075	5432	4115	5625	7847	8831	5609	6717	5243	12340
2017	86373	7542	5334	4999	164	6448	9038	1017	8507	7152	6498	5865	14655
Non-Residents													
2015	40547	2726	3095	3408	3097	3015	3062	4230	3985	3346	3442	3288	3853
2016	50609	3405	3142	3644	3557	3342	4122	5232	5394	4439	4562	3752	6018
2017	52280	4435	4294	4741	213	4712	5233	6947	3776	4622	4059	3705	5543
Residents													
2015	15428	1353	1039	1222	1530	1225	1113	1126	1302	1095	1335	1170	1918
2016	17140	1628	1072	1720	1077	1055	1093	1642	1342	1339	1785	1238	2149
2017	15842	1414	1252	1030	20	1314	1595	1491	1151	1404	1426	1284	2461

Source: KWS (2018)

Research Problem

Seasonality in tourism traditionally is regarded as a major problem to be overcome, but relatively little research has been conducted on the causes of this phenomenon in NNP, Kenya. Seasonality affects the number of tourists to a destination in Kenya and therefore can threaten

the viability of tourism businesses. Baum and Hagen (2009), argue that causes of seasonality depend on the location of the destination and the location of the tourism enterprise within a destination

Despite, Kenya continuing to record impressive number of tourists' in 2018 (GOK, 2019), seasonality tends to be a huge crisis affecting the tourism industry as a whole. Problems still exist in identifying the basic causes of seasonality and the reason for its persistence. This is why this research looked into the causes of seasonality.

From the above studies, it is against this finding that the researcher sought to establish the causes of seasonality in the Kenyan tourism industry, specifically at NNP.

Objectives

The main objective is to establish the visitor's perceptions towards the causes of seasonality in the Kenyan tourism industry, specifically, the causes of seasonality at the Nairobi National Park (NNP).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Economic Theory

The Economic theory deals with the laws and principles governing the function of the country's economy, such that the theory keeps track of benefits and costs of business. Human wants and needs for goods and services are unlimited and also productive resources to produce goods and services are scarce. In such a scenario, to allocate scarce resources to human wants and needs is a major problem (Dewett, 1986). According to Bar-on (2005), the seasonality of tourism to the present day seasonality can be described as a cyclical variation in the number of tourist visits, which is repeated every year. The causes of seasonality and the consequences of this phenomenon, which occurs in Kenyan tourism has to be analysed, in light of improving tourism in the country as one of the economic drivers.

Causes of Seasonality

Hylleberg (2002), groups the causes of seasonality into the three different categories: weather (e.g. temperatures); Calendar influence (e.g. timing of religious festivals such as Christmas) and timing decisions (e.g. school vacations, industry vacations). Hylleberg (2002), points out

that some causes are stable over long periods, e.g, the timing of Christmas, some change at discrete intervals, e.g. vacations, some vary continuously but predictably, e.g. the timing of Easter, whilst others are unpredictable -e.g. the weather (Dallari, 1982).

Butler and Mao (1997), argue that the ageing population may in the long term, change seasonal patterns because elderly population are less restricted in the timing of their holiday. The ageing population in North Europe, e.g. from United Kingdom, Sweden and Norway is an important segment for seasonality policies in Kenya tourism for product modification. Butler (2004) suggests that social pressure or fashion, the sporting season and tradition activities are significant additional causes of seasonality.

In order to find new strategies and policies to tackle tourism seasonality it is important to realise not only the features and causes of seasonality in destinations (supply side), but also to analyse the factors of seasonality where this phenomenon is generated (demand side).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research adopted descriptive research design which measures a set of variables as they exist naturally and seeks to provide answers (Mugenda, 2008).

Target Population

The target population was 448 average visitors to NNP in the month of August, 2018 (KWS,2018) (Table 2).

Sample Size

The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was used to select 205 visitors as the sample size for the study.

Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was divided into two major sections, namely; seeking the respondents' demographic profile and Likert Scale questions concerning the causes of seasonality in tourism.

Data Analysis

The collected data was cleaned, transformed and edited by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse quantitative and qualitative data, descriptive analysis used means, percentages and frequency distributions and charts. Inferential analysis used correlation and regression tests including ANOVA and X²-square to test the level of relationships between the research variables. The general form of the Multiple Linear Regression Model was used i.e.;

$$Y = a + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + e$$

Where; Y-Seasonality; X1-Weather; X2- Calendar influence; X3 - timing decisions; X4 - social pressures and e: Error term

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Response Rate

Out of 205 visitor respondents, majority (60%, n=123) did not respond, while 40% (n=82) respondent. The visitors at NNP differed between the visitor respondents ($\chi^2 = 6.667$; $df = 1$; $p = 0.001$; Table 4.1). However, the response rate was considered credible enough to provide the basis for arriving to the conclusions of the study.

Type of tourist

The visitor respondents were asked the type of tourist visiting NNP, 82 of the visitor respondents interviewed, 78% (n=64) were domestic tourists while 22% (18) were international tourists, and this differed between the respondents ($\chi^2 = 142.54$; $df = 1$; $p = 0.001$).

Descriptive Statistics

The researcher conducted descriptive analysis on Weather, Calendar influence, timing decisions and social pressures as shown in the table 3.4 below, all the results are significant which demonstrates that can be used to moderate the existence of seasonality at the park as explained below.

Weather season in tourism

The respondents were asked if the weather causes the seasonality in tourism in a Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The results showed that of the 64 visitors respondents, 59% strongly agree with 59%, 22% agreed and 10% were neutral, that Natural seasonality is caused by weather patterns. Institutionalized seasonality is caused by weather; 21% strongly

agreed, 38% agreed and 21% were neutral. The responses did not defer significantly between the respondents ($\chi^2=3.94$; $df=1$; $p=0.011$).

Calendar influence season in tourism

The respondents were asked the various methods causing seasonality in tourism. The results showed out of 64 visitors respondents, majority (40%, $n=26$) of the visitors strongly agreed, 23% agreed and 37% were neutral, that Natural seasonality is caused by calendar influence, whereas institutionalized seasonality caused by calendar influence; 21% strongly agreed, 38% agreed and 21% were neutral. The responses did not defer significantly among the respondents ($\chi^2=-1.58$; $df=1$; $p=0.019$; Table 3).

Timing decision season in tourism

The visitor’s respondents were to indicate in the Likert scale strongly agree to strongly disagree timing decisions in tourism, the results showed that of the 64 visitors respondents, 40% strongly agree in timing decision, 23% agreed and 37% were neutral, that Natural seasonality is caused by timing decision. Institutionalized seasonality caused by timing decision as 37% strongly agree, 23% agreed, 55% neutral, 20% disagreed and 15% strongly disagreed, the finding did not differ between the respondents ($\chi^2=1$; $df=1$; $p=0.023$).

Social Pressures season in tourism

The 64 visitor’s respondents on the social pressure causing seasonality in tourism found that 23% strongly agreed, 17% agreed, 35% neutral, that Natural seasonality is caused by social pressure in seasonality, while institutionalized seasonality caused by social pressure, strongly agree 37%, agreed 23%, neutral 55%, disagree 20% and 15% strongly disagree, these findings did not differ significantly between the visitor’s respondents ($\chi^2=2.91$; $df=1$; $p=0.004$; Table 3).

Table 3: The Causes of Seasonality.

		Natural	Institutionalized	X ²	df	P-Value
Weather	Strongly agree	59%	21%	3.94	1	0.011
	Agree	22%	38%			
	Neutral	10%	21%			
	Disagree	0	0			

	Strongly disagree	0	0			
Calendar influence	Strongly agree	40%	50%	1.58	1	0.019
	Agree	23%	27%			
	Neutral	37%	53%			
	Disagree	0%	0%			
	Strongly disagree	0%	0%			
Timing decision	Strongly agree	46%	54%	1.39	1	0.023
	Agree	31%	69%			
	Neutral	23%	77%			
	Disagree	0%	0%			
	Strongly disagree	0%	0%			
Social pressures	Strongly agree	23%	37%	2.91	1	0.013
	Agree	17%	23%			
	Neutral	35%	55%			
	Disagree	10%	20%			
	Strongly disagree	25%	15%			

Source: Researchers data (2018)

Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

The researcher conducted a Correlation analysis to investigate the relationship between the Causes of Seasonality at the NNP (Table 4).

Table 4: Gives a Summary of the Findings

	Seasonality	Weather	Calendar influence	Timing decisions	social pressures
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Seasonality	Pearson Correlation	1	.753**	.711**	.633**	.751**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000
	N	46	46	46	46	46
Weather	Pearson Correlation	.753**	1	.522**	.452**	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-	0.000	0.003	0.000
	N	46	46	46	46	46
Calendar influence	Pearson Correlation	.711**	.522**	1	.543**	.553**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	0.001	-	0.000	0.000
	N	46	46	46	46	46
Timing decisions	Pearson Correlation	.633**	.452**	.543**	1	.695**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	0.003	.000	-	0.000
	N	46	46	46	46	46
social pressures	Pearson Correlation	.751**	.480**	.553**	.695**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	-
	N	46	46	46	46	46

Source: Researchers data (2018)

The Correlation results above indicated that there is a positive relationship between seasonality and weather as indicated by a Pearson correlation coefficient of .753**, This relationship was found to be statistically significant as the significant value was 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Moreover, a Pearson correlation coefficient of .711** and .633** indicate a strong and positive relationship between Seasonality and both Calendar influence and timing decisions respectively. This relationship was found to be statistically significant as the significant value was 0.000 which is less than 0.05. The relationship between Social pressures on seasonality is indicated by a Pearson correlation coefficient of .751**. This relationship was found to be statistically significant as the significant value was 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (Table 4).

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to establish the individual influence of independent on dependent variables. The results are summarized in tables 5, 6 and 7.

Table 5: Coefficients

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.276	.167	-	-1.515	.009
	Weather (X1)	.246	.077	.251	6.482	.000
	Calendar influence (X2)	.314	.059	.178	5.116	.000
	Timing decisions (X3)	.205	.063	.202	3.227	.003
	Social pressures (X4)	.235	.052	.298	4.676	.000

Source: Research data (2018)

From table 5, the study established the following regression equation.

$$Y = -0.276 + 0.246X1 + 0.314X2 + 0.205X3 + 0.235X4 + .15946$$

Holding other factors constant then firm seasonality would be -0.276. A unit increase in weather results to a 0.246-unit increase in seasonality, holding other factors constant. A unit increase in calendar influence leads to a 0.314 increase in seasonality, a unit increase in timing decisions results in a 0.205-unit increase in seasonality. A unit increase in social pressures, while results to a 0.235-unit increase in seasonality.

Table 5 also indicates that the all the predictors are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$ since p-values are less than 0.05 (weather (p=0.00), calendar influence (p=0.00), timing decisions (p=0.03), social pressure's (p=0.00).

Model Summary

The model summary table 3 indicates an R2 of 0.852. This implies that 85.2% of the variations in the dependent variable Y are explained by the variations in the independent variables X1, X2, X3 and X4. This means that they can be used to predict seasonality, and therefore a multiple regression model is an efficient predictor (Table 6)

Table 6: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.923 ^a	.852	.901	.15946
a. Predictors: (Constant), Weather, Calendar influence, timing decisions and social pressures				

Source: Research data (2018)

ANOVA

The study further tested the significance of the model by use of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) technique. The findings are tabulated in table below. From the ANOVA statics, the review set up the relapse demonstrate had a significance level of 0.2% which means that the information was perfect for making a conclusion on the populace parameters as the estimation of significance level (P-Value) was under 5%. The ANOVA table 7 reports an F test value of 80.333 which is significant at p value $0.002 < 0.05$. This is an indication that Weather, Calendar influence, timing decisions and social pressures have a significant influence on seasonality. The significance value was less than 0.05 indicating that the model was significant.

Table 7: ANOVA Table

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	10.2816	4	2.5704	80.333	.002 ^b
	Residual	13.4400	42	.032		
	Total	23.7216	46			
a. Dependent Variable: seasonality						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Weather, Calendar influence, timing decisions and social pressures						

Source: Research data (2018).

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

The findings indicate that the NNP experiences both natural and institutionalized seasonality. Seasonality at the park is experienced weekly where visitors are many during the weekend and few during week days more so during October to December the visitors are many this is as a result of long holiday and people are free. (Table 2)

Correlation analysis, presented the result as shown in the model summary table 4.4 indicating an R² of 0.852. This implies that 85.2% of the variations in the dependent variable Y are explained by the variations in the independent variables X1, X2, X3 and X4. Where this means that they can be used to predict seasonality, and therefore a multiple regression model is an efficient predictor. The study established the following regression equation. $Y = -0.276 + 0.246X_1 + 0.314X_2 + 0.205X_3 + 0.235X_4 + 1.15946$. Where, Y-Seasonality, X1-Weather, X2-Calendar influence, X3 - timing decisions and X4 - social pressures.

The findings indicated that seasonality is caused by weather (Temperatures); calendar influence (Timing national holidays and religious festivals such as Christmas); timing decisions (school vacations/ tours, industry vacations) and social pressures or fashion (sporting season and traditions and physical factors) in the destination. The ANOVA statics, significance level of 0.2%, means that the information was perfect for making a conclusion on the parameters as the estimation of significance level (P-Value) was under 5%. The ANOVA table reports an F test value of 80.333 which is significant at p-value $0.002 < 0.05$. This is an indication that Weather, Calendar influence, timing decisions and social pressures have a significant influence on seasonality. The significance value was less than 0.05 indicating that the model was significant. The Findings is in agreement with Wall and Yan (2003) which noted that the influences have increased their relevance due to the growth of mass tourism and number of enterprises depending on tourism has grown and expanded in size, thus the ability to adapt to changes in demand has been reduced. All the predictors are statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ since p-values are less than 0.05.

This finding are in agreement with Baum and Hagen (1999), argue that seasonality depends on the location of the destination and the location of the tourism enterprise within a destination, reflecting in part the variety of physical conditions and the nature of attractions.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the NNP experiences both seasonal and institutionalized seasonality, this is in line with Bar-on (2005) and Hartmann (2006), who argue that seasonality can be categorized into two primary types namely; Natural and Institutional seasonality as per their findings.

This study concludes that the causes of seasonality are weather (Temperatures), calendar influence (Timing national holidays and religious festivals such as Christmas), Timing decisions (school vacations/ tours, industry vacations), social pressures or fashion, the sporting season and traditions and physical factors and climate in the destination. All the predictors are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$ since p-values are less than 0.05 (weather (p=0.00), calendar influence (p=0.00), timing decisions (p=0.03), social pressure (p=0.00).

Recommendations

The study recommends that the government to give incentives to domestic tourists to visit the park regularly and in order to reduce the negativity of institutionalized seasonality.

Suggestion to further research

Further studies be done on the strategies to mitigate the causes of seasonality at the NNP.

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