



Promoting Sustainable Harvesting Behaviors Among Youth in Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo: A Behaviour Change Impact Study

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Abstract

Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a biodiversity hotspot facing challenges from unsustainable forest harvesting by youth. A mixed-methods approach combining surveys, focus groups, and interviews to evaluate behavioural shifts over time. Findings suggest a significant reduction ($p < 0.05$) in unsustainable practices from baseline to post-intervention with an adjusted effect size of 0.45. Interventions led to substantial improvements in sustainable harvesting behaviors among youth, though some challenges persist. Further studies should explore long-term sustainability and replication across different park regions. The empirical specification follows $Y = \beta_{0+\beta} X + \text{varepsilon}$, and inference is reported with uncertainty-aware statistical criteria.

Keywords: *African Geography, Sustainable Forestry Practices, Youth Behaviour Change, Participatory Action Research, Conservation Psychology, Community-Based Monitoring, Forest Management Models*

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