FACULTY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FISHERIES POLICIES AND REGULATIONS IN LAKE VICTORIA: A CASE STUDY OF MASAKA DISTRICT, UGANDA.

BY

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR AWARD OF BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN FISHERIES AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

I TUKASHABA EDMUND MORAN, declare that this study is original and has not been submitted for the award of a degree at any other university before.

Signed…….

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This dissertation has been submitted with the approval of my academic supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this report to my beloved family of Mr. Singura Deus M. and Mrs. Nyangireki M. Singura.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFALU	Association of Fishers and Lake Users of Uganda.
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BMU	Beach Management Unit
CPUE	Catch Per Unit Effort
DFR	Directorate of Fisheries Resource
EAC	East African Community
FPU	Fisheries Protection Unit
IUU	Illegal Unreported Unregulated
Kg	Kilogram
Km	Kilometer
LVFO	Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries
mm	Millimeters
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
NaFIRRI	National Fisheries Resource Research Institute
NEMA	National Environmental Management Authority
NFP	National Fisheries Policy
SOFIA	State Of Fisheries and Aquaculture

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effectiveness of fisheries policies and regulations on Lake Victoria using Masaka district, Uganda, as a case study. It focused on the role of these policies and regulations in the sustainable management and conservation of fish stocks in Lake Victoria. Using a combination of field surveys, interviews with key stakeholders and document analysis of the existing fisheries data, the research assessed compliance levels among fishers and the broader fishing communities, explored the impact of these policies and regulations on fish production and identified the factors contributing to the ongoing conflicts between fishers and policy enforcement officers. The findings revealed that while policies and regulations are in place, compliance among fishers' remains inconsistent, largely due to economic disparity and the fisheries resources access hurdles. The study also highlights that the existing policies and regulations have minimal impact on the fish catches but rather the reduced catches are as a result of declining fish stocks. The study further highlights that the conflicts between fishers and enforcement officers are largely driven by economic pressures, corruption, mistrust, militarization of the fishery and resource scarcity. Despite the challenges of conflicts, effective enforcement combined with stakeholder inclusiveness plus community awareness could improve compliance and lead to better conservation outcomes. This study provides crucial insights into the complexities of fisheries management in Lake Victoria and offers recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of policies and regulations in the area. These include strengthening enforcement mechanisms, fostering collaboration between stakeholders and improving community awareness to promote sustainable fishing practices to ensure long-term viability of the fisheries resources in Masaka district.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

With a surface size of 68,800 km² and an elevation of 1134 m above sea level, Lake Victoria is Africa's largest inland water fishery. The lake is shared by three countries: the United Republic of Tanzania (51%), the Republic of Kenya (6%), and the Republic of Uganda (43%). The East African Community Partner States of the Republic of Burundi (7%), the Republic of Kenya (22%), the Republic of Rwanda (11%), the United Republic of Tanzania (44%) and the Republic of Uganda (16%) share its 194,000 km² catchment (LVFO, 2018). The lake has a mean depth of 40 m, a maximum depth of 84 m, a shoreline of 3450 km and a water retention time of 140 years (Njiru M. , 2006). The lake has at least 10 major in-flowing rivers; (Kagera, Sio, Nzoia, Yala, Nyando, Sondu Miriu, Migori, Mara, and Katonga) and one outflow of (River Nile) at Jinja, Uganda (LVFO, 2021). Lake Victoria fishery contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product of three East African countries and the income and food security of the riparian people in the Lake Victoria basin region. The fisheries of Lake Victoria employ thousands of people and serve as a vital source of food for millions of individuals, both locally and globally. Moreover, the lake plays a critical role in providing numerous ecosystem services (LVFO, 2022). The Lake ecosystem and its satellite wetlands are home to more than 300 different fish species (Razack, 2014) but these had been reduced to 200 species by 2016 (LVFO, 2018).

The commercial fishery is dominated by three species; the predatory Nile Perch (Lates niloticus), Nile tilapia (Oreochromis niloticus) and Silver cyprinid (Rastrineobola argentea) constituting over 95 % of total fish catch in Lake Victoria (LVFO, 2018). Over 500 indigenous haplochromine fish species, which up until the early 1980s accounted for over 80% of the fish biomass in Lake Victoria, have vanished as a result of the lake's drastic ecosystem change over time. After 2000, these began to recover, with a few number of zooplanktivores (*Yssichromis laparogramma* and *Yssichromis pyrrhocephalus*) controlling the majority of the population. These organisms had undergone adaptive radiation to survive and proliferate in the new environment (LVFO, 2021). Acoustic surveys undertaken during (2016-2020) showed that stocks of Nile perch, Dagaa, Other species mainly haplochromines and *Caridina nilotica* increased and this was attributed to the improved enforcement on the lake especially by Uganda and Tanzania (LVFO, 2020).

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