

## ***Abstract***

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<b>Title:</b> <b>Influence of Crowding on Visitor Satisfaction in the Hohe Tauern National Park</b>	

### **Abstract:**

One of the purposes of protected areas, such as national parks, is to maintain a balance between nature conservation and tourism. Increasing number of visitors can not only threaten nature conservation, but also affect visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to investigate the relationship between the perception of crowding and visitor satisfaction. In addition, national-park affinity, which measures the importance of the label as a national park, is also used to characterize visitors and is used as an influencing factor. The data were collected in a quantitative method with the help of a questionnaire at three locations in the Hohe Tauern National Park and subsequently analyzed. At the same time, own observations and data from measuring instruments were also included.

The results show a positive correlation between visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Beside that no correlation between perceived crowding and satisfaction exists. National-park affinity also has no effect on either the perception of crowding or satisfaction. Considering perceptions of crowding together with measured visitor numbers shows a correlation and underlines the relevance of crowding as a measurement variable.

The results are limited by high satisfaction, unevenly distributed national-park affinity, and subjective perceptions of crowding.

At present, the visitor management of the National Park contributes positively to the fulfillment of the expectations for the number of visitors and for the stay in general, and the balance between nature conservation and tourism is accomplished.

On the one hand, recommendations for action for the Hohe Tauern National Park result from a closer look at the national park affinity, since this reflects the awareness of the visitors for the national park and its protection goals. On the other hand, the optimization of individual attributes that have a minimal negative impact on satisfaction should be considered. The inclusion of measured visitor numbers on site in relation to the subjective perception of crowding is recommended in order to identify a possible turning point in satisfaction at an early stage.

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