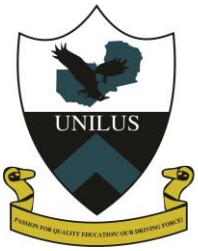

UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA

SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF LEADERSHIP ON THE SUCCESS OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN ZAMBIA: A CASE OF THE KAFUE NATIONAL PARK CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT.

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Brighton Chama, declare that this submission results from my original work and research. The study has not been submitted in whole or in part for any degree or qualification at any other University. I further declare that all sources of information and contributions from others have been appropriately acknowledged.

Produced by: **Brighton Chama**

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Date: **23rd January, 2025**

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Date: **23.01.2025**

DEDICATION

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my family, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and sacrifices have been the foundation of my journey. I am grateful to my parents for teaching me the value of perseverance and hard work, to my siblings Bernard and Brian, and to my cousin Musonda Martha for their constant cheerleading and belief in me.

To all of you, my deepest gratitude and love—this achievement is as much yours as it is mine.

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ABSTRACT

Wildlife conservation projects are essential for biodiversity preservation, yet their success often hinges on effective leadership. In Zambia, large-scale initiatives like the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative face challenges in achieving sustainable conservation outcomes due to leadership deficiencies. While leadership is recognized as a critical factor in project success, limited research exists on how specific leadership traits influence conservation efforts. This study examined the impact of assertiveness, sociability, enthusiasm, and expressiveness on the success of wildlife conservation projects. It aimed to assess the effect of leader assertiveness on project scope adherence, sociability on milestone achievement, enthusiasm on cost management, and expressiveness on deliverable quality. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 150 conservation officers, project managers, and stakeholders through a structured questionnaire. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between leadership traits and project success indicators. Findings revealed that leader assertiveness was crucial for maintaining project scope through clear communication and accountability. Leader sociability enhanced milestone achievement by fostering trust and collaboration, while leader enthusiasm played a key role in cost management by motivating teams to optimize resources. Leader expressiveness significantly influenced deliverable quality by improving stakeholder engagement. Regression analysis indicated a strong positive correlation ($R = .81$, $R^2 = .66$), with assertiveness having the greatest impact. The study suggests that conservation leadership training should focus on developing integrated skill sets rather than isolated traits, with adaptations to local cultural contexts for more effective project outcomes.

Keywords: *Leadership Traits, Conservation Projects, Project Success, Assertiveness, Sociability, Enthusiasm, Expressiveness*

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Leadership, defined as the ability to influence, guide, and motivate individuals or groups toward achieving a common goal, plays a crucial role in the theory and practice of wildlife conservation project management. In this context, leadership involves decision-making, strategic planning, and stakeholder engagement to ensure the effective implementation of conservation initiatives. Organizations should prioritize developing and implementing effective leadership strategies to enhance productivity and increase project performance in conservation efforts (Black et al., 2011). Over time, leadership techniques have evolved significantly, particularly in achieving conservation goals and fostering community involvement. However, ineffective leadership in wildlife conservation initiatives may lead to project failures, including missed deadlines, budgetary constraints, and the inability to meet conservation targets (Bruyere, 2015).

Similarly, project success in the context of wildlife conservation refers to the ability of initiatives to achieve their intended objectives, including biodiversity protection, sustainable resource management, and community engagement. Successful conservation projects are those that meet their goals efficiently, remain financially viable, and align with national and international conservation standards. This study employs the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative as a case study to examine the relationship between leadership and project success in Zambia's conservation efforts.

Wildlife conservation projects, particularly those involving critical ecosystems such as national parks, are subject to rigorous scrutiny and evaluation to ensure their effectiveness, sustainability, and alignment with global conservation standards. This chapter delves into a pertinent issue within the conservation landscape, specifically focusing on the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative in Zambia. Recent Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), formerly Zambia Wildlife Authority

(ZAWA) assessments have raised concerns over the project's progress, citing issues related to community engagement, poaching prevention, and habitat restoration (Siamudaala et al., 2009). This has called for a closer examination of the leadership strategies employed in the project as it continues to develop.

1.1. Background to the study

The effectiveness of conservation initiatives has been a subject of global discourse, particularly in the context of leadership and project management in protected areas. Across different regions, scholars have emphasized the complexity of conservation efforts and the need for strategic leadership to navigate the multifaceted challenges involved (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013). In Africa, Asia, and Latin America, conservation projects often encounter challenges such as inadequate community engagement, anti-poaching inefficiencies, and habitat degradation, which can compromise project success (Manolis et al., 2009). The necessity of effective leadership in conservation is therefore a critical component in ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of these initiatives.

International studies on conservation governance have highlighted that successful conservation programs require adaptive, transformational, and collaborative leadership styles (Black et al., 2011). In particular, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has stressed that strong governance and leadership play pivotal roles in the management of protected areas (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013). Despite the increasing recognition of leadership's significance in conservation, gaps remain in understanding how leadership directly influences conservation project outcomes across different ecological and socio-political contexts (Biggs et al., 2011).

In the Zambian context, these global conservation challenges manifest in the case of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) has raised concerns regarding the initiative, particularly in relation to project leadership, community engagement, anti-poaching measures, and habitat restoration progress (Simasiku et al., 2008). A meticulous evaluation of the initiative, conducted with various stakeholders, has revealed potential discrepancies between the

project's original objectives and the established standards for effective wildlife conservation.

As noted by Sutherland et al. (2009), conservation projects are dynamic and often encounter unforeseen challenges that demand competent leadership to ensure long-term success. In the case of Kafue National Park, the challenges identified underscore the importance of effective leadership throughout the project's life cycle (Bruyere, 2015). Without strong leadership, conservation initiatives risk delays, budgetary inefficiencies, and failure to meet conservation goals (Biggs et al., 2011).

Given these concerns, it is evident that leadership is a decisive factor in determining the success of conservation projects, including the Kafue National Park initiative. The existing challenges emphasize the need for an enhanced focus on leadership development within conservation management, ensuring that strategies such as adaptive and transformational leadership are effectively integrated to drive project performance and sustainable conservation outcomes (Black et al., 2011).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Wildlife conservation in Zambia faces significant challenges, including resource constraints, human-wildlife conflicts, and climate change impacts (Simasiku et al., 2008). While numerous conservation initiatives have been launched to address these issues, leadership remains an overlooked yet critical factor in determining their success. Lindsey et al. (2014) emphasizes the growing demand for effective conservation strategies, underscoring the need for competent leadership to ensure projects are executed efficiently—on schedule, within budget, and aligned with conservation goals.

The Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative, initially conceived as a model for biodiversity protection and sustainable community development, exemplifies the complexity of conservation efforts. However, despite its ambitious vision, the initiative has encountered serious challenges. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) has raised concerns over inadequate community engagement, persistent poaching, and

slow progress in habitat restoration. These issues highlight a deeper problem: an apparent disconnect between the project's original objectives and its actual outcomes.

This disconnect raises fundamental questions about leadership in conservation projects. Were the leadership strategies employed in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative effective? How did leadership (or the lack thereof) influence project implementation and outcomes? Existing studies on Zambian conservation projects have explored general industry challenges (Simasiku et al., 2008) and resource limitations (Nyirenda et al., 2018), but little research has explicitly examined the role of leadership in determining project success or failure.

This study seeks to bridge that gap. By analysing leadership strategies within the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative, it aims to uncover whether ineffective leadership contributed to its struggles and, more broadly, how leadership influences conservation project performance. In doing so, this research contributes to the growing discourse on the necessity of strategic leadership in wildlife conservation—an area crucial to ensuring long-term sustainability in conservation efforts.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

1.3.1 General Objective

The Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative will be used as a case study to explore the effects of leadership on the success of wildlife conservation projects in Zambia.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To evaluate the influence of leader assertiveness on the extent of adherence to project scope in Zambian wildlife conservation initiatives.
2. To analyse the correlation between leader sociability and achieving scheduled milestones for Zambia conservation projects.

3. To assess the effectiveness of leader enthusiasm in managing and controlling project costs in Zambian wildlife conservation efforts.
4. To investigate the impact of leader expressiveness on enhancing the quality of project deliverables in Zambian conservation initiatives.

1.4 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does leader assertiveness impact the degree of adherence to project scope in Zambian wildlife conservation initiatives?
2. What is the relationship between leader sociability and achieving scheduled milestones for conservation projects in Zambia?
3. How effective is leader enthusiasm in managing and controlling project costs in Zambian wildlife conservation efforts?
4. How does leader expressiveness impact and enhance the quality of project deliverables in Zambian conservation initiatives?

1.5 Study Hypotheses

Research by Lockwood et al. (2010) suggests that assertive leadership improves project control and scope management in conservation efforts. According to Bruyere and Rappe (2007), effective leader assertiveness enhances project stakeholders' understanding of conservation goals and potential scope deviations. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesise that robust leader assertiveness positively influences project scope adherence in wildlife conservation initiatives.

1. H_{01}: Leader assertiveness does not significantly impact the degree of adherence to project scope in Zambian wildlife conservation initiatives.

   H_{a1}: Leader assertiveness significantly impacts the degree of adherence to project scope in Zambian wildlife conservation initiatives.

In their study, Manolis et al. (2009) found that sociable leadership contributes to improved stakeholder engagement and collaboration, which can prevent delays in conservation projects. Additionally, Biggs et al. (2011) highlight that well-executed sociable leadership strategies can improve project scheduling and on-time delivery of conservation outcomes. Hence, it is plausible to hypothesise that intense leader sociability is associated with the timely completion of conservation milestones.

2. H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between leader sociability and achieving scheduled milestones for conservation projects in Zambia.

   H_{a2}: Leader sociability is significantly related to achieving scheduled milestones for conservation projects in Zambia.

Research by Straka et al. (2018) suggests that enthusiastic leadership assists in resource mobilisation and efficient allocation, leading to better cost management in conservation projects. Black et al. (2011) also emphasise that leader enthusiasm helps identify and leverage cost-effective conservation strategies. Thus, it is reasonable to hypothesise that adequate leader enthusiasm influences project cost management in wildlife conservation efforts.

3. H_{03}: Leader enthusiasm in managing and controlling project costs in Zambian wildlife conservation efforts is ineffective.

   H_{a3}: Leader enthusiasm is significantly effective in managing and controlling project costs in Zambian wildlife conservation efforts.

Bruyere (2015) states that expressive leadership improves communication and stakeholder engagement, allowing for more effective public awareness campaigns and higher-quality conservation outcomes. Research by Manfredo et al. (2014) suggests that leader expressiveness improves conservation education and community participation. Therefore, it is plausible to hypothesise that adequate leader expressiveness positively impacts the quality of project deliverables in conservation initiatives.

4. H_{04}: There is no significant impact of leader expressiveness on enhancing the quality of project deliverables in Zambian conservation initiatives.

   H_{a4}: Leader expressiveness significantly impacts enhancing the quality of project deliverables in Zambian conservation initiatives.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is critical because it will provide insight into how leadership and the success of wildlife conservation projects in Zambia relate. By analysing how effective leadership strategies can enhance conservation project performance, this research will assist local conservation organisations in developing and implementing best practices for leadership in wildlife conservation efforts. The results of this study will be helpful to government agencies, conservation NGOs, project funders, and other parties engaged in wildlife conservation, in addition to local conservation managers.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the effects of leadership strategies on the success of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative in Zambia. The main variables of the study are leader assertiveness, sociability, enthusiasm, and expressiveness (independent variables) and project success (dependent variable). The study is conducted explicitly on the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative in the western province of Zambia. The Kafue National Park is Zambia's largest national park and a critical ecosystem for wildlife conservation (Simasiku et al., 2008).

This study's participants are project managers and team leaders at the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) and partnering conservation organisations directly involved in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. These conservation leaders serve as the primary source of data for the study.

1.8 Operational Definition of key terms

In this study, the following key terms are defined operationally:

Leadership influences and guides individuals or groups towards achieving conservation goals and objectives (Black et al., 2011).

Project success: The accomplishment of conservation project objectives within the constraints of the project, such as fulfilling budgetary limits, timeframes, and standards of performance in wildlife protection and habitat restoration (Bruyere, 2015).

Wildlife conservation projects: The planning, designing, and implementation of initiatives aimed at protecting and preserving wildlife species and their habitats (Lindsey et al., 2014).

Leader assertiveness: The ability of a leader to communicate expectations, make decisions, and address challenges directly in conservation projects (Lockwood et al., 2010).

Leader sociability: The capacity of a leader to build and maintain positive relationships with team members, stakeholders, and local communities in conservation efforts (Manolis et al., 2009).

Leader enthusiasm: A leader's passion and positive energy inspire and motivate team members and stakeholders in wildlife conservation initiatives (Straka et al., 2018).

Leader expressiveness: The ability of a leader to effectively communicate ideas, goals, and vision to diverse audiences in the context of wildlife conservation projects (Bruyere, 2015).

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter explored the historical context and significance of effective leadership in wildlife conservation project management. The chapter highlighted the challenges posed by complex conservation environments and the critical role of leadership in mitigating their impact. Additionally, the knowledge gap within the Zambian conservation industry, particularly in large-scale initiatives like the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative, was identified, culminating in formulating the central research question and specific

objectives. The subsequent chapters will delve deeper into these objectives, shedding light on the intricate relationship between leadership strategies and the success of wildlife conservation projects in Zambia.

1.10 Organization of the rest of the Report

The organisation of the remaining sections of this research report is designed to systematically delve into each facet of the study's objectives and hypotheses, providing a comprehensive exploration of the effects of leadership on the success of wildlife conservation projects in Zambia. The subsequent chapters offer a cohesive progression through the research process, each contributing crucial insights culminating in a holistic understanding of the research problem.

Chapter Two: Literature Review This chapter will delve into the existing literature on leadership in wildlife conservation, project success factors, and the interplay between these elements. It will critically analyse previous studies, theoretical frameworks, and empirical evidence to establish a solid foundation for the study.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology In this chapter, the research methodology adopted for this study will be outlined. The choice of research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques will be elaborated upon, ensuring transparency and rigour in the research process.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Findings Building upon the data collected through the research methodology, this chapter will present the study's analysed results. Each specific objective and its corresponding research question will be addressed, and the hypotheses tested will be evaluated based on the empirical data.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Interpretation This chapter will offer an in-depth interpretation of the findings from Chapter Four, focusing on their implications and relevance to the research objectives and hypotheses. The results will be juxtaposed with the existing literature, allowing for the identification of patterns, discrepancies, and trends.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations In this concluding chapter, the research journey will culminate in synthesising the study's key findings and insights. The conclusions drawn from the data will be aligned with the objectives, offering a concise summary of the study's contributions to knowledge. Additionally, recommendations will be provided for practitioners, policymakers, and future researchers, suggesting potential strategies for enhancing the success of wildlife conservation projects through effective leadership in Zambia.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This literature review section explores the multifaceted relationship between leadership traits and conservation project outcomes, focusing on Zambia's Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. By examining historical contexts, empirical studies, and theoretical frameworks, this chapter will provide a good foundation for understanding the importance of effective leadership in wildlife conservation efforts.

2.1 Historical Background

The history of wildlife conservation is deeply intertwined with the evolution of leadership approaches. From the establishment of the first protected areas to contemporary conservation efforts, leadership has played a defining role in shaping policies, management strategies, and stakeholder engagement. Early conservation efforts were often driven by centralized, top-down decision-making, but over time, the field has evolved to embrace more inclusive and adaptive leadership models. Understanding this historical trajectory provides crucial context for analysing leadership's role in modern conservation initiatives.

2.1.1 Leadership

The concept of leadership in wildlife conservation has undergone significant transformations over the past century, mirroring broader shifts in management philosophy and environmental governance. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, conservation leadership was largely authoritarian, with figures like Gifford Pinchot advocating for a command-and-control approach in resource management. While effective in establishing protected areas and setting foundational policies, this model often overlooked the social and economic complexities of conservation.

The emergence of conservation biology in the 1980s marked a turning point, emphasizing interdisciplinary approaches and the integration of ecological and social sciences (Soulé, 1985). This period also saw a growing recognition of the need for collaborative leadership models that engaged multiple stakeholders. The Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) further reinforced this shift, advocating for

sustainable development as a framework for conservation leadership that balances environmental, economic, and social priorities.

In the 21st century, leadership in conservation has continued to evolve toward more adaptive, participatory, and systems-based approaches. Manolis et al. (2009) argue that modern conservation leadership must extend beyond technical expertise to include strategic thinking, stakeholder collaboration, and the ability to manage uncertainty. Black and Copsey (2014) expand on this by applying Deming's management principles to conservation, emphasizing the need for leaders who understand systems theory, psychology, and organizational dynamics. Similarly, Bennett et al. (2017) highlights the critical role of transformational leadership in driving policy change and mobilizing resources for conservation efforts.

The historical progression of conservation leadership—from rigid, hierarchical models to dynamic, participatory frameworks—reflects the increasing complexity of environmental challenges. As conservation projects face unprecedented pressures from climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio-political conflicts, the demand for skilled leaders who can navigate these complexities has never been greater. This evolution underscores the importance of effective leadership in shaping conservation outcomes, making it a central focus of contemporary conservation research and practice.

2.1.2 Wildlife Conservation Projects

Wildlife conservation-related projects have, over the past century, also undergone a significant transformation, evolving from isolated protected area initiatives to complex, multi-stakeholder endeavours that span entire landscapes. This evolution reflects changing scientific understanding, shifts in societal values, and the growing recognition of the interconnectedness between human well-being and ecosystem health. In the early 20th century, wildlife conservation projects primarily focused on establishing and managing protected areas, often following the "fortress conservation" model that sought to separate wildlife from human communities. This approach, while successful in preserving some critical habitats and species, often led to conflicts with local communities and failed to address broader ecological and social issues. Brockington's (2002) influential critique of fortress conservation in Africa highlighted the social injustices and

environmental limitations of this model, sparking a reassessment of conservation approaches globally. The 1980s and 1990s saw a shift towards more integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs), which aimed to reconcile conservation goals with local economic development. Wells and Brandon's (1992) comprehensive review of ICDPs highlighted both the promise and challenges of this approach, emphasising the need for long-term commitment and flexible project designs. While ICDPs represented a significant advancement in conservation thinking, they often struggled to achieve both conservation and development objectives simultaneously.

The turn of the 21st century witnessed the emergence of landscape-scale conservation approaches, exemplified by initiatives like the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative in North America and the Great Limpopo Trans Frontier Park in southern Africa. As Sayer et al. (2013) analysed, these projects attempt to address conservation challenges at ecologically meaningful scales, often crossing political boundaries and involving diverse stakeholder groups. This shift towards landscape approaches reflects a growing understanding of the importance of ecological connectivity and the need to balance conservation with sustainable resource use.

Simultaneously, there has been an increased focus on community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa. The CAMPFIRE program in Zimbabwe, studied extensively by Child and Barnes (2010), exemplifies this approach, demonstrating both the potential and challenges of devolving wildlife management authority to local communities. CBNRM projects have highlighted the importance of local knowledge, incentives, and institutional arrangements in achieving conservation outcomes.

More recently, there has been a growing emphasis on “conservation enterprises” and market-based approaches to wildlife conservation. Naidoo et al.'s (2016) analysis of wildlife-based tourism in Namibia provides evidence of these approaches' potential to generate significant economic benefits for local communities while supporting conservation objectives. However, these market-based initiatives also raise questions about equity, resilience, and long-term sustainability. The evolution of wildlife

conservation projects reflects a broader trend towards more holistic, participatory, and adaptive approaches. Modern conservation initiatives increasingly recognise the complex social-ecological systems within which wildlife exists and seek to develop interventions that address multiple objectives across various scales. This complexity underscores the critical need for effective leadership in navigating the diverse challenges and opportunities presented by contemporary wildlife conservation projects.

2.1.3 Project Success

In the early days of formal wildlife conservation, project success was often measured in relatively simplistic terms, such as the size of protected areas established or the population numbers of charismatic species. However, as the field matured, there was growing recognition of the limitations of these narrow metrics. Kleiman et al.'s (2000) seminal review of species reintroduction programs highlighted the need for more comprehensive and long-term assessments of project outcomes, considering factors such as population viability, ecosystem function, and socioeconomic impacts. Salafsky et al. (2002) contributed significantly to the field by proposing a comprehensive framework for evaluating conservation project success. Their work emphasised the importance of clear goals, measurable indicators, and adaptive management processes. This framework, widely adopted and adapted by conservation organisations globally, includes threat reduction measures, biodiversity impact, and programmatic performance. Importantly, it also recognises the need to consider both short-term outputs and long-term conservation outcomes.

Building on this foundation, Kapos et al. (2009) developed a conceptual framework for assessing conservation success that explicitly links interventions to outcomes through a series of logical steps. Their approach, which emphasises the importance of theory-based evaluation, has been influential in helping conservation practitioners articulate and test the assumptions underlying their work. This framework has been instrumental in complex conservation landscapes where multiple interventions and external factors interact to influence outcomes.

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the need to incorporate social and economic dimensions into assessments of conservation project success. Bottrill et al.'s (2011) global study of conservation planning initiatives highlighted the importance of considering factors such as stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and policy influence alongside more traditional ecological metrics. Their work underscores the multidimensional nature of conservation success and the need for holistic evaluation approaches. The emergence of the “triple bottom line” concept in conservation, as explored by Ardoin et al. (2020), further expands our understanding of project success to encompass environmental, social, and economic outcomes. This approach recognises that truly successful conservation projects must achieve ecological goals and contribute to social equity and financial well-being. It challenges conservation leaders to develop more integrated and inclusive approaches to project design, implementation, and evaluation.

Moreover, there is growing attention to the temporal aspects of conservation success. Kareiva and Marvier's (2012) provocative analysis of conservation outcomes over time highlights the dynamic nature of socio-ecological systems and the need for long-term monitoring and adaptive management. They argue that true conservation success must be measured not just in terms of immediate project outputs but in the resilience and adaptability of conservation interventions over time.

The evolution in how we define and measure project success in wildlife conservation reflects a broader shift towards more holistic, systems-based thinking. Modern approaches recognise the interconnectedness of ecological, social, and economic factors and the need for multifaceted evaluation frameworks. This complexity underscores the critical role of effective leadership in navigating the diverse challenges and trade-offs inherent in achieving and measuring conservation success.

2.1.4 Evaluating the Influence of Leader Assertiveness on the Extent of Adherence to Project Scope

Leader assertiveness has emerged as a crucial trait in maintaining project focus and achieving conservation goals, particularly in wildlife conservation's complex and often contentious arena. The influence of assertive leadership on project scope adherence is a

multifaceted issue that has garnered increasing attention in conservation literature and practice. Dietz et al.'s (2004) comprehensive study on leadership in community-based conservation initiatives provided ground-breaking insights into the role of assertiveness in project management. Their research, which spanned multiple continents and diverse ecological contexts, found that assertive leaders were more effective in negotiating conflicts and ensuring adherence to project objectives. They observed that assertive leadership was particularly crucial when conservation goals conflicted with short-term economic interests or traditional practices. Leaders who could articulate clear boundaries and expectations while remaining open to dialogue were more successful in maintaining project integrity in the face of competing pressures.

Building on this foundation, Manolis et al. (2009) extensively reviewed leadership skills in conservation science and practice. Their work highlighted assertiveness as a key component of effective conservation leadership, particularly in situations requiring difficult decisions or unpopular actions. They argued that assertive leaders are better equipped to navigate the complex trade-offs inherent in many conservation projects, helping to focus on long-term ecological goals even in the face of short-term challenges or setbacks.

However, the application of assertive leadership in conservation contexts is not without its complexities and potential pitfalls. Bruyere's (2015) influential work on conservation leadership in cross-cultural contexts provides a vital counterpoint, cautioning that assertiveness must be balanced with cultural sensitivity and local legitimacy. Through a series of case studies in East Africa, Bruyere demonstrated how overly assertive leadership styles, particularly when perceived as imposed from outside, could undermine local support and jeopardise project outcomes. His research underscores the need for contextually appropriate expressions of assertiveness that respect local norms and power structures while maintaining a clear focus on conservation objectives.

Biggs et al.'s (2011) analysis of leadership in collaborative conservation initiatives further elaborates on the importance of calibrating assertiveness to specific project phases and challenges. Their longitudinal study of marine protected area management in Australia revealed that the optimal level of leader assertiveness often varied throughout the project

lifecycle. They found that highly assertive leadership was most effective during project initiation and in times of crisis, while a more collaborative approach was beneficial during the implementation and stakeholder engagement phases. This nuanced understanding of assertiveness highlights the need for adaptive leadership styles that can evolve with changing project dynamics.

Recent work by Stern et al. (2017) on environmental leadership in the Anthropocene era adds another layer to our understanding of assertiveness in conservation contexts. Their research suggests that assertive leadership must be coupled with systems thinking and collaborative problem-solving skills as conservation challenges become increasingly complex and interconnected. They argue for a “tempered assertiveness” that allows leaders to articulate clear visions and boundaries while remaining open to diverse perspectives and innovative solutions.

The influence of leader assertiveness on project scope adherence is further complicated by the increasing recognition of the need for adaptive management in conservation. As articulated in Williams and Brown's (2014) seminal work on adaptive management for natural resources, conservation projects often require flexibility and responsiveness to changing conditions. This presents a potential tension with traditional notions of scope adherence, challenging leaders to balance assertiveness in maintaining core project objectives with openness to necessary adaptations.

In Africa, where many conservation projects intersect with complex social, economic, and political realities, assertive leadership requires finesse. Mkumbo et al.'s (2019) study of community-based conservation initiatives in Tanzania highlights how effective leaders must navigate traditional power structures, government bureaucracies, and international donor expectations while focusing on conservation goals. Their work emphasises the importance of building local legitimacy and trust as a foundation for assertive leadership in project management.

Research on leader assertiveness and project scope adherence in conservation contexts points to a nuanced relationship that defies simple prescriptions. While assertiveness is essential for maintaining project focus and achieving conservation outcomes, its

effectiveness is heavily mediated by cultural context, project phase, and specific challenges. Effective conservation leaders must develop a refined sense of when and how to assert project boundaries and expectations, balancing firmness with flexibility and cultural sensitivity. As wildlife conservation projects continue to grapple with increasingly complex and interconnected challenges, the skilful application of assertive leadership will remain a critical factor in ensuring project success and lasting conservation impact.

2.1.5 Assessing the Effectiveness of Leader Enthusiasm in Managing and Controlling Project Costs

The role of leader enthusiasm in resource mobilisation and cost management has gained increasing attention in conservation literature, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of passionate and committed leadership in achieving project success. This section explores how leader enthusiasm influences the financial aspects of wildlife conservation projects, drawing on a rich body of empirical research and theoretical frameworks. Bottrill et al.'s (2011) comprehensive analysis of conservation planning initiatives provides a foundational understanding of the relationship between leadership qualities and project outcomes, including cost management. Their global study, encompassing 136 conservation planning initiatives across six continents, found that enthusiastic leadership was significantly associated with more efficient resource allocation and improved project outcomes. The researchers observed that enthusiastic leaders were more effective in inspiring team members, stakeholders, and donors, leading to increased resource availability and more innovative approaches to cost management.

Howe et al. (2014) explored the relationship between leadership styles and fundraising success in conservation organisations. Their study, which combined quantitative analysis of financial data with qualitative interviews of conservation leaders, revealed a strong positive correlation between leader enthusiasm and an organisation's ability to secure diverse and sustainable funding sources. Enthusiastic leaders were found to be particularly effective in communicating the urgency and importance of conservation work to potential donors, resulting in more substantial and long-term financial commitments. The impact of leader enthusiasm on cost management extends beyond fundraising to the

efficient use of resources within projects. Iacona et al.'s (2018) work on cost-effective conservation planning highlights the crucial role of leadership in making difficult resource allocation decisions. Their research, which included case studies from marine and terrestrial conservation projects, demonstrated that enthusiastic leaders were more likely to pursue innovative cost-saving measures and to motivate team members to find creative solutions to resource constraints. This enthusiasm-driven approach to cost management was found to be particularly effective in projects facing significant financial pressures or operating in resource-limited environments.

Pressey et al.'s (2017) critical analysis of conservation planning practices cautions against the potential pitfalls of overly enthusiastic leadership in project budgeting. Their work suggests that extremely enthusiastic leaders sometimes underestimate costs or overestimate the ease of achieving project objectives, leading to unrealistic budgets and potential resource shortfalls. This highlights the need for enthusiasm to be tempered with pragmatism and rigorous financial planning.

In the African context, where many conservation projects operate under significant resource constraints, leader enthusiasm in cost management takes on particular importance. Lindsey et al.'s (2018) comprehensive review of funding shortfalls in African protected areas underscores the critical need for innovative and efficient resource use. Their research suggests that enthusiastic leaders who effectively communicate the value of conservation investments are better positioned to address these funding gaps and implement cost-effective management strategies.

Biggs et al.'s (2019) work on transformative conservation leadership in southern Africa highlights how enthusiastic leaders can foster a culture of innovation and adaptive management that contributes to more efficient resource use. Their case studies demonstrate how leaders who combine enthusiasm with a deep understanding of local contexts are better able to identify and implement cost-effective conservation strategies that resonate with both ecological needs and community values. The impact of leader enthusiasm on cost management is also evident in the realm of partnerships and collaborations, which are increasingly crucial for addressing complex conservation

challenges. Imperial et al.'s (2016) analysis of large-scale conservation initiatives in North America reveals how enthusiastic leaders can catalyse cross-sector partnerships that leverage diverse resources and expertise. Their research shows that leaders who passionately articulate a shared vision for conservation can often secure in-kind contributions and pro-bono services, effectively expanding project resources beyond formal budgets.

The relationship between leader enthusiasm and cost management extends to volunteer engagement, a critical resource in many conservation projects. Asah and Blahna's (2012) study of environmental stewardship programs demonstrates how enthusiastic leadership can significantly increase volunteer recruitment, retention, and productivity. By inspiring a sense of purpose and commitment among volunteers, enthusiastic leaders effectively expand the human resources available to conservation projects, indirectly contributing to cost management by reducing the need for paid staff or contractors.

It is important to note that the effectiveness of leader enthusiasm in managing project costs can vary across different phases of a conservation initiative. Cumming et al.'s (2015) longitudinal study of protected area management effectiveness highlights how the optimal balance of leadership qualities, including enthusiasm, may shift over time. They found that while high levels of enthusiasm were particularly crucial during project initiation and overcoming early obstacles, sustained cost management required a transition to more structured and systematic approaches as projects matured.

The role of leader enthusiasm in cost management is further complicated by the increasing emphasis on demonstrating a return on investment in conservation. As explored in Waldron et al.'s (2017) global analysis of conservation finance, there is growing pressure on conservation leaders to manage costs effectively and articulate the economic value of conservation outcomes. Enthusiastic leaders who can compellingly communicate the multiple benefits of ecological, social, and economic conservation investments are better positioned to justify project costs and secure ongoing financial support.

In the context of technological advancements and big data in conservation, leader enthusiasm plays a crucial role in driving the adoption of cost-effective, innovative solutions. Arts et al.'s (2015) review of digital technology in conservation highlights how enthusiastic leadership is often the key factor in overcoming institutional inertia and embracing new tools that can significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of conservation efforts. It is also worth noting that the relationship between leader enthusiasm and cost management is bidirectional. Clements et al.'s (2016) work on evidence-based conservation suggests that leaders who successfully implement cost-effective strategies and demonstrate tangible conservation impacts often experience increased enthusiasm, creating a positive feedback loop that can further enhance project performance and resource mobilization.

In conclusion, research on leader enthusiasm and cost management in conservation projects reveals a complex and nuanced relationship. While enthusiasm is generally associated with more effective resource mobilization, innovative cost-saving measures, and increased stakeholder engagement, its impact is mediated by the project phase, organizational context, and specific challenges. Effective conservation leaders must strategically cultivate and channel their enthusiasm, balancing passion with pragmatism to ensure sustainable and cost-effective project implementation. As wildlife conservation initiatives continue to face resource constraints and increasing demands for accountability, the ability of leaders to harness enthusiasm for effective cost management will remain a critical factor in achieving lasting conservation impact.

2.1.6 Investigating the Impact of Leader Expressiveness on Enhancing the Quality of Project Deliverables

The impact of leader expressiveness on the quality of project deliverables in wildlife conservation initiatives is a critical yet often underexplored aspect of conservation leadership. Below are the studies on the multifaceted ways in which a leader's ability to articulate vision, communicate effectively, and inspire stakeholders influences the tangible outcomes of conservation projects.

Mascia et al.'s (2014) comprehensive global study on the implementation of marine protected areas (MPAs) provides foundational insights into the role of leadership

expressiveness in conservation outcomes. Their analysis of over 4,000 MPAs worldwide revealed that expressive leaders were significantly more successful in engaging diverse stakeholders and translating complex scientific concepts into actionable conservation strategies. The study found that MPAs led by highly expressive individuals demonstrated better ecological outcomes, more effective enforcement, and higher levels of community support – all key project quality indicators.

Stern et al.'s (2017) work on environmental leadership in the Anthropocene era emphasizes the critical role of narrative and storytelling in conservation leadership. Through a series of case studies spanning multiple continents, they demonstrate how expressive leaders use compelling narratives to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and public action. Their research highlights that leaders who articulately convey the urgency of conservation challenges while inspiring hope and agency are more likely to mobilize resources, foster innovation, and ultimately deliver high-quality conservation outcomes.

The impact of leader expressiveness on project quality is further elucidated in Cvitanovic et al.'s (2015) exploration of knowledge exchange in conservation and natural resource management. Their work underscores the crucial role of expressive leadership in facilitating the integration of scientific evidence into conservation practice. They found that leaders who could effectively communicate complex ecological concepts to diverse audiences – from local communities to policymakers – were more successful in implementing evidence-based conservation strategies, thereby enhancing the overall quality and effectiveness of project deliverables.

Dickman et al.'s (2019) analysis of human-wildlife conflict mitigation projects in East Africa reveals how expressive leaders play a pivotal role in fostering dialogue and building trust between conservation organizations and local communities. Their research demonstrates that projects led by individuals who could articulate conservation goals in culturally resonant ways achieved more sustainable and high-quality outcomes, particularly in terms of community engagement and long-term conflict reduction. The relationship between leader expressiveness and project quality is also evident in the realm of

conservation policy and advocacy. Rose et al.'s (2018) study on the science-policy interface in biodiversity conservation highlights how expressive leaders are more effective in influencing policy decisions and securing political support for conservation initiatives. Their work suggests that leaders who can compellingly communicate the societal benefits of conservation, beyond purely ecological arguments, are more likely to achieve policy outcomes that enhance the overall quality and impact of conservation projects.

Mattson et al.'s (2011) research on interdisciplinary collaboration in conservation science emphasizes the role of expressive leadership in fostering innovation and creative problem-solving. They found that leaders who could articulate a clear and inspiring vision were more successful in bringing together diverse expertise and perspectives, leading to more comprehensive and high-quality project deliverables.

The digital age has introduced new dimensions to leader expressiveness in conservation. Toivonen et al.'s (2019) analysis of social media use in conservation science and practice demonstrates how digitally expressive leaders can significantly expand the reach and impact of conservation messages. Their research shows that leaders who effectively leverage digital platforms not only increase public engagement with conservation issues but also foster global collaborations that enhance the quality and scope of project outcomes.

However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of leader expressiveness can vary across cultural contexts. Waylen et al.'s (2010) comparative study of community-based conservation projects highlights the need for culturally attuned expressiveness. They found that leaders who could adapt their communication styles to local norms and values were more successful in fostering genuine community participation, which in turn led to higher quality and more sustainable project outcomes.

The impact of leader expressiveness on project quality is also influenced by the temporal scale of conservation initiatives. Redford et al.'s (2013) work on the “time lag” in conservation outcomes emphasizes the need for leaders to maintain clear and consistent communication over extended periods. Their research suggests that expressive leaders

who can sustain stakeholder engagement and commitment through long-term conservation processes are more likely to achieve high-quality, enduring outcomes.

2.2 Related Studies (Empirical Review)

The empirical literature on leadership in wildlife conservation provides a rich tapestry of insights into the relationships between specific leadership traits and project outcomes. This section reviews key studies relevant to the research objectives, focusing on leader assertiveness, sociability, enthusiasm, and expressiveness.

2.2.1 Leader Assertiveness and Extent of Adherence to Project Scope:

Gutiérrez et al.'s (2011) seminal study on co-managed fisheries provides robust evidence for the importance of leader assertiveness in maintaining project scope. Their research, spanning 130 co-managed fisheries globally, found a strong positive correlation between assertive leadership and compliance with management plans. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of fisheries data with qualitative assessments of leadership styles. Notably, they found that assertive leaders were more effective in enforcing regulations and resolving conflicts, leading to better adherence to conservation objectives.

Building on this, Oldekop et al.'s (2019) meta-analysis of 169 case studies on community forest management revealed that projects led by assertive individuals were likelier to maintain their ecological focus despite competing socio-economic pressures. Their study highlighted how assertive leadership was particularly crucial in contexts where short-term economic incentives conflicted with long-term conservation goals. However, the relationship between assertiveness and project scope adherence is not always straightforward. Nost's (2014) ethnographic study of a wetland restoration project in Wisconsin, USA, offers a nuanced perspective. While assertive leadership was generally associated with better scope adherence, overly assertive approaches sometimes led to community backlash, potentially compromising project objectives. This underscores the need for contextually appropriate expressions of assertiveness.

2.2.2 Leader Sociability and the Successful Achievement of Scheduled Milestones

Westley et al.'s (2013) in-depth analysis of social innovation in ecosystem management provides crucial insights into the role of sociable leadership. Through a series of case studies spanning North America and Europe, they employed a multi-method approach, including social network analysis, stakeholder interviews, and document analysis. Their research demonstrates how sociable leaders excel in building networks, facilitating collaboration, and navigating complex stakeholder landscapes. A key strength of this study is its longitudinal aspect, tracking projects over several years to show how the social capital generated by sociable leaders contributes significantly to efficient project implementation and timely achievement of conservation milestones. However, the authors also caution that highly sociable leaders sometimes struggle to make difficult decisions that might alienate specific stakeholders, highlighting a potential drawback of this leadership style.

Complementing this perspective, Berdej and Armitage's (2016) study of marine conservation networks in Indonesia offers a quantitative approach to understanding the impact of sociable leadership. Employing social network analysis and statistical modelling, they mapped the relationships between various actors in multiple marine conservation projects. Their findings indicate that projects led by highly sociable individuals were more likely to meet scheduled milestones, particularly in multi-stakeholder conservation initiatives. The study's strength lies in its ability to quantify the impact of leadership sociability on specific project outcomes, providing concrete evidence of its benefits. However, Evans et al.'s (2015) comparative analysis of leadership styles in African protected areas introduces an important caveat. While sociable leadership generally correlated with better milestone achievement, its effectiveness was moderated by the institutional context. In settings with weak governance structures, highly sociable leaders sometimes struggled to maintain project focus, suggesting the need for a balance between sociability and other leadership traits.

2.2.3 Leader Enthusiasm and Managing and Controlling Project Costs

Waldron et al.'s (2013) comprehensive global analysis of conservation project efficiency provides empirical support for the link between leader enthusiasm and effective resource

management. Their study, which examined over 2,000 conservation projects across 170 countries, found that projects led by enthusiastic individuals were associated with improved cost-effectiveness in biodiversity conservation efforts. The researchers employed a novel approach, combining financial data with leadership assessments to quantify the impact of enthusiasm on project outcomes.

This finding is further supported by Iacona et al.'s (2018) work on cost-effective conservation planning. Through a series of case studies in Australia and North America, they demonstrated how enthusiastic leaders were more likely to pursue innovative funding strategies and motivate team members to find creative solutions to resource constraints. Notably, their research highlighted how leader enthusiasm was particularly crucial in maintaining team morale and productivity during periods of financial uncertainty.

Pressey et al.'s (2017) critical analysis of conservation planning practices introduces a vital nuance. While enthusiasm generally contributed to better cost management, they found instances where overly enthusiastic leaders underestimated project costs or overcommitted resources. This highlights the need for enthusiasm to be tempered with realistic financial planning and risk assessment.

2.2.4 Leader Expressiveness and the Quality of Project Deliverables

Bennett et al.'s (2017) exploration of leadership in conservation policy implementation provides strong evidence for the impact of leader expressiveness on project quality. Their global study, encompassing both developed and developing countries, found that expressive leaders were more successful in translating conservation goals into tangible outcomes. Through a combination of surveys and in-depth interviews, they demonstrated how expressive leadership enhanced stakeholder engagement, facilitated knowledge transfer, and ultimately led to higher quality project deliverables.

This is complemented by Cvitanovic et al.'s (2015) research on knowledge exchange in conservation and natural resource management. Their study, focused on marine protected areas in Australia and the Pacific, revealed that expressive leaders were more effective in bridging the science-policy gap, leading to more evidence-based and impactful conservation interventions. Waylen et al.'s (2010) comparative analysis of

community-based conservation projects in developing countries introduces an important cultural dimension. They found that while expressiveness generally enhanced project quality, its effectiveness was mediated by local cultural norms. Leaders who could adapt their communication styles to local contexts were more successful in fostering genuine community participation, leading to higher quality and more sustainable project outcomes.

These empirical studies collectively highlight the complex and context-dependent nature of leadership in wildlife conservation projects. While assertiveness, sociability, enthusiasm, and expressiveness generally contribute positively to project outcomes, their effectiveness is moderated by factors such as institutional context, cultural norms, and the specific challenges of each conservation initiative. This underscores the need for adaptive and nuanced leadership approaches to respond to wildlife conservation's diverse and evolving demands in different settings.

2.3 Empirical Summary

The following table summarises key empirical studies relevant to leadership in wildlife conservation projects. These studies, drawn from both global contexts and specific African regions, offer insights into various aspects of conservation leadership, including assertiveness, enthusiasm, expressiveness, and their impacts on project outcomes. The summary highlights the main findings of each study, identifies gaps in the research, and explains how the current survey of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative addressed these gaps. This compilation contextualises the present research within the broader landscape of conservation leadership studies and underscores the unique contributions this study seeks to make.

Table 2.1 Complied summary of findings and research gaps

Location	**Author Name**	**Title of Study**	**Findings of the Study**	**Gaps in the Study**	**How the study addressed the gaps**
Global	Gutiérrez et al. (2011)	“Leadership, social capital and incentives promote successful fisheries”	Strong correlation between assertive leadership and compliance with fisheries management plans across 130 co-managed fisheries.	Limited focus on how leadership interacts with other socio-ecological factors.	This study explored the interplay between leadership traits and broader contextual factors in the Kafue National Park setting.
Global	Waldron et al. (2013)	“Targeting global conservation funding to limit immediate biodiversity declines”	Projects led by enthusiastic individuals showed improved cost-effectiveness in biodiversity conservation	Limited exploration of the mechanisms through which enthusiasm translates to cost-effectiveness.	This research investigated the specific ways leader enthusiasm influences cost management in the context of the Kafue National Park

			efforts across 170 countries.		Conservation Initiative.
Global	Bennett et al. (2017)	“Conservation social science: Understanding and integrating human dimensions to improve conservation”	Expressive leaders were more successful in translating conservation goals into tangible outcomes and enhancing stakeholder engagement.	Lack of focus on how expressiveness interacts with other leadership traits.	This study examined the combined effects of expressiveness and other leadership traits on project outcomes in Kafue National Park.
East Africa	Dickman et al. (2019)	“Carnivores, culture and 'contagious conflict': Multiple factors influence perceived problems with carnivores in Tanzania's Ruaha landscape”	Expressive leaders play a crucial role in mitigating human-wildlife conflicts through effective communication and trust-building with local communities.	Limited focus on how leadership expressiveness interacts with other conservation strategies.	This study examined how leader expressiveness combines with other leadership traits to influence overall project outcomes in the Kafue National Park context.

Southern Africa	Lindsey et al. (2018)	“More than $1 billion needed annually to secure Africa's protected areas with lions”	Highlighted the critical funding shortfalls in African protected areas and the need for innovative leadership in resource mobilization.	Limited exploration of how different leadership styles influence funding outcomes.	This research investigated how various leadership traits, including enthusiasm and expressiveness, impact resource mobilization and cost management in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative.
West Africa	Bruyere (2015)	“Giving direction and clarity to conservation leadership”	Identified the importance of assertive and adaptive leadership in navigating complex conservation challenges in West African protected areas.	Lack of quantitative analysis on the impact of leadership traits on specific project outcomes.	This study employed a mixed-methods approach to quantify the impact of leadership traits on various aspects of project

					success in Kafue National Park.

Source: Author, 2024.

2.3.1 Research Gap

Despite the growing body of literature on leadership in wildlife conservation, significant gaps remain in our understanding of how specific leadership traits interact and influence project outcomes in diverse African contexts. While studies have explored individual leadership characteristics, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining the interplay between assertiveness, sociability, enthusiasm, and expressiveness in large-scale conservation initiatives like the Kafue National Park project.

Moreover, much of the existing research has focused on global trends or specific case studies in other regions, with relatively limited attention to the unique challenges and opportunities of conservation leadership in Zambia and similar African contexts. The complex socio-ecological landscape of the Kafue National Park, with its diverse stakeholders and multifaceted conservation challenges, provides a rich setting for exploring these leadership dynamics in greater depth.

Additionally, while previous studies have often examined leadership in terms of specific project outcomes (e.g., community engagement, policy implementation), there is a need for more holistic research that considers how leadership influences multiple dimensions of project success simultaneously. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how different leadership traits affect project scope adherence, milestone achievement, cost management, and the quality of deliverables within a single, complex conservation initiative. The existing literature often treats leadership traits as static qualities, with limited exploration of how they might evolve or be adapted throughout a long-term conservation project. This study will contribute to filling this gap by examining leadership dynamics over the lifespan of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative, providing insights into how effective leaders navigate changing challenges and stakeholder dynamics over time.

By addressing these gaps, this study aims to provide a more nuanced and contextually grounded understanding of conservation leadership in Zambia, contributing valuable insights to both academic discourse and practical conservation management in similar African settings.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in a combination of leadership theories that provide a robust foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of leadership in wildlife conservation projects. The primary theoretical lens is transformational leadership theory, supplemented by elements of adaptive leadership theory and situational leadership theory.

2.4.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

The core theoretical framework for this study is Bass and Riggio's (2006) transformational leadership theory. This theory posits that effective leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity. Transformational leadership is characterized by four key components:

i. Idealized Influence: Leaders serve as role models, demonstrating high ethical standards and gaining the trust and respect of followers.

ii. Inspirational Motivation: Leaders articulate a compelling vision and inspire enthusiasm and optimism about future goals.

iii. Intellectual Stimulation: Leaders encourage innovation and creativity by challenging assumptions and soliciting new ideas from followers.

iv. Individualized Consideration: Leaders attend to the individual needs of followers, acting as mentors or coaches.

In the case of wildlife conservation, transformational leadership offers a valuable framework for understanding how leaders can drive change and foster innovation in complex socio-ecological systems. For example, Manolis et al. (2009) applied

transformational leadership theory to conservation science, arguing that it is particularly relevant in addressing the multifaceted challenges of biodiversity conservation.

2.4.2 Adaptive Leadership Theory:

To complement the transformational leadership framework, this study also draws on Heifetz et al.'s (2009) adaptive leadership theory. This approach emphasizes the importance of leadership in addressing adaptive challenges that require changes in values, beliefs, and behaviours. Key principles of adaptive leadership include:

i. Identifying adaptive challenges

ii. Regulating distress

iii. Maintaining disciplined attention

iv. Giving work back to the people

v. Protecting leadership voices from below

Adaptive leadership theory is particularly relevant to wildlife conservation, where leaders must navigate complex, evolving challenges that often lack clear solutions. Redford et al. (2013) applied adaptive leadership concepts to conservation planning, highlighting its value in managing uncertainty and fostering learning in conservation initiatives.

2.4.3 Situational Leadership Theory

Additionally, this study incorporates elements of Hersey and Blanchard's (1969) situational leadership theory, which proposes that effective leadership is contingent on the readiness level of followers and the specific situation. This theory suggests that leaders should adapt their style (directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating) based on the task at hand and the competence and commitment of their team.

In line with this study, situational leadership theory offers insights into how leaders might adjust their approach based on the diverse stakeholders involved in conservation projects and the varying challenges encountered throughout a project's lifecycle. For instance,

Black et al. (2011) applied situational leadership concepts to conservation effectiveness, emphasizing the need for leaders to adapt their style to different conservation contexts.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this study aims to develop a comprehensive framework for understanding leadership in wildlife conservation. The transformational leadership theory provides the overarching structure, emphasizing the inspirational and motivational aspects of leadership crucial for long-term conservation success. Adaptive leadership theory complements this by focusing on how leaders navigate complex, evolving challenges, particularly relevant in the dynamic context of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. Situational leadership theory adds a layer of flexibility, recognizing that effective leadership in conservation may require different approaches at different project stages or with various stakeholder groups.

This integrated theoretical framework will guide the investigation of how specific leadership traits (assertiveness, sociability, enthusiasm, and expressiveness) manifest in the context of transformational, adaptive, and situational leadership approaches. It will help in analysing how these traits contribute to the various aspects of project success, including scope adherence, milestone achievement, cost management, and quality of deliverables.

By grounding the research in these established leadership theories while tailoring the approach to the specific context of wildlife conservation in Zambia, this study aims to contribute both theoretically and practically to our understanding of effective conservation leadership.

2.4.1 Theory Justification

This study is fundamentally anchored in transformational leadership theory as its primary theoretical foundation while drawing complementary insights from adaptive and situational leadership theories. The selection and integration of these theories were deliberately chosen to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding leadership effectiveness in wildlife conservation projects, particularly within the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative context.

Transformational leadership theory (Bass and Riggio, 2006) serves as the main theoretical underpinning due to its unique alignment with the challenges and requirements of conservation leadership. Several key factors justify its selection. First, the theory's idealised influence component directly addresses how leader assertiveness shapes project outcomes through role modelling and standard-setting crucial elements in conservation projects where maintaining ecological standards amidst competing pressures is essential. Second, its emphasis on inspirational motivation provides a theoretical basis for understanding how leader enthusiasm and expressiveness contribute to stakeholder engagement and resource mobilization, particularly relevant in resource-constrained conservation contexts. Third, the intellectual stimulation component helps explain how leaders foster innovation in addressing complex conservation challenges, while the individualized consideration element provides a framework for understanding how leader sociability influences stakeholder relationships.

The dynamic nature of conservation challenges justifies the decision to complement transformational leadership theory with adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive leadership theory specifically addresses how leaders navigate situations without clear solutions, a common scenario in conservation projects where ecological, social, and economic factors interact in complex ways. This theoretical perspective helps explain how leaders must modulate their assertiveness and expressiveness when addressing diverse types of conservation challenges, from technical problems to adaptive challenges requiring stakeholder learning and behavior change.

Situational leadership theory (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969) was selected as the third theoretical component because it addresses the contextual nature of leadership effectiveness in conservation projects. Its inclusion is justified by the need to understand how different leadership approaches may be required at various project stages and with other stakeholder groups. This theoretical perspective helps explain why certain leadership traits might be effective in different conservation contexts, providing a framework for understanding the dynamic nature of leadership requirements across the project lifecycle.

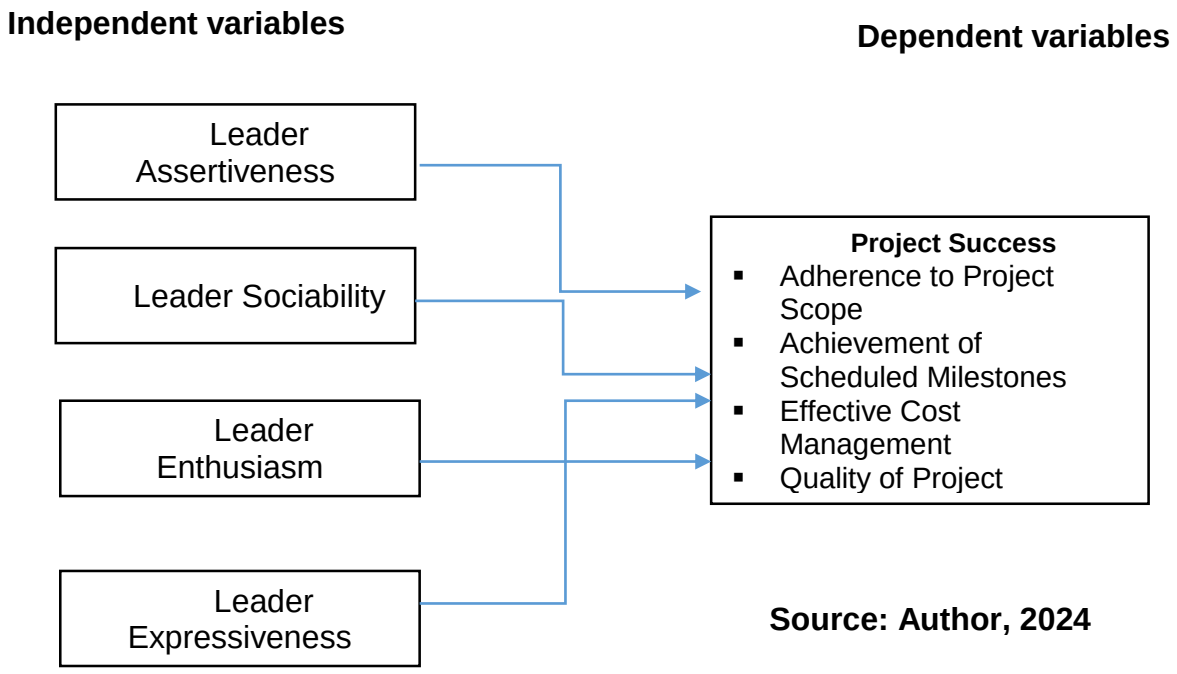
This theoretical framework not only guides the study's methodology and hypothesis testing but also ensures that findings can be interpreted in ways that contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical application of leadership in wildlife conservation projects. The selection of these theories reflects a careful consideration of their relevance to the study's objectives and their ability to explain the complex relationships between leadership traits and conservation project outcomes in the African context.

The framework's comprehensiveness ensures that the study's findings can be understood within established theoretical contexts while contributing new insights specific to conservation leadership in Zambia. This theoretical foundation will help advance our understanding of how leadership traits contribute to conservation project success, providing theoretical insights and practical guidance for enhancing leadership effectiveness in wildlife conservation initiatives.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical framework and the literature review, the following conceptual framework has been developed to guide this study:

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Author, 2024

This conceptual framework illustrates the hypothesized relationships between the independent variables (leader assertiveness, sociability, enthusiasm, and expressiveness) and the dependent variable (project success).

2.5.1 Explanation of Variables

Independent Variables

1. Leader Assertiveness

   The ability of a leader to communicate expectations clearly and address challenges directly. This will be measured through leader self-assessments and team member evaluations using adapted versions of existing assertiveness scales.

2. Leader Sociability

   The capacity of a leader to build and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders. This will be assessed through social network analysis and stakeholder surveys.

3. Leader Enthusiasm

   A leader's passion and positive energy inspire and motivate team members and stakeholders. This will be evaluated through team climate assessments and project engagement metrics.

4. Leader Expressiveness

   The ability of a leader to effectively communicate ideas, goals, and vision to diverse audiences. This will be measured through communication effectiveness surveys and stakeholder feedback.

Dependent Variable

Project Success

A composite measure encompassing multiple dimensions of conservation project outcomes. This will be assessed through quantitative and qualitative indicators, including adherence to the project, achievement of scheduled milestones, effective cost management and Quality of project deliverables.

This conceptual framework posits that leader assertiveness, sociability, enthusiasm, and expressiveness positively influence project success through their effects on key mediating processes. By examining these variables and their interactions, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how leadership traits contribute to conservation project success in the complex socio-ecological context of Zambia. This framework will guide data collection, analysis, and interpretation, helping to bridge the identified research gaps and contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical application of effective conservation leadership.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This literature review has provided an overview of leadership in wildlife conservation, highlighting the evolution of leadership approaches, the complexities of conservation projects, and the critical role of specific leadership traits in project success. By synthesizing historical perspectives, empirical studies, and theoretical frameworks, this chapter lays the foundation for investigating the impact of leadership on the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. The identified research gap underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of leadership dynamics in African conservation contexts, which this study aims to address through its focus on specific leadership traits and their influence on project outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed in the study, including the research approach, research design, study population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection methods, data analysis, reliability and validity, and ethical considerations.

Both primary and secondary data were used to compile the research data. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data, while quarterly and annual performance reports, financial records detailing project expenditures and resource allocation, conservation monitoring data tracking wildlife populations and habitat conditions, and formal stakeholder feedback records were used to collect secondary data.

3.1 Research Approach

The study adopted a quantitative approach grounded in the positivist paradigm, emphasizing objective measurements and statistical analysis of data collected through surveys and structured observations. This approach aligns with similar studies in conservation leadership, such as Gutiérrez et al. (2011), which employed quantitative methods to examine leadership impacts on conservation outcomes. The selection of a quantitative approach was particularly appropriate for this study as it could quantify the study at hand by generating numerical data and converting it into statistics. It was also essential to use a quantitative approach as it was ideal to test hypotheses and draw statistically valid conclusions that can be generalized across larger populations.

This study was grounded in the **positivist paradigm**, which is rooted in the philosophy of **positivism**—a perspective that emphasizes empirical evidence, objectivity, and the use of systematic methods to derive knowledge. Positivism, originally established by **Auguste Comte (1830–1842)**, asserts that valid knowledge is only attainable through direct observation, measurement, and logical analysis of empirical data. It rejects metaphysical explanations and instead relies on quantifiable data to explain phenomena.

In the context of conservation leadership, positivism provides a structured framework for examining cause-and-effect relationships between leadership traits and conservation project success. By applying a **scientific approach**, the study seeks to uncover objective patterns that can inform future conservation leadership strategies.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, which Bryman (2016) identifies as effective for examining relationships between variables at a specific point in time. This design was chosen because it allowed for the collection of data from multiple stakeholders involved in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative simultaneously, providing a good snapshot of leadership impacts on project outcomes.

The design incorporated both descriptive and correlational elements. This design was deemed ideal as it involves collecting data at one point in time from a large sample to understand the prevalence or relationship between different variables.

3.3 Study Population

The study population comprised all professional staff and key stakeholders in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. This included:

i. Project managers and team leaders (N=45)

ii. Conservation officers and technical staff (N=120)

iii. Department of National Parks and Wildlife officials (N=35)

iv. Partner organization representatives (N=30)

v. Local conservation area committee members (N=50)

The total study population consisted of 280 individuals directly involved in project implementation and oversight. This population was chosen based on their direct experience with leadership practices and project outcomes within the conservation initiative.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (1967) for finite populations: $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (280)

e = margin of error (.05)

Confidence level = 95%

Using this formula:

$n = 280 / (1 + 280(.05)^2)$

n = 165 respondents

To account for potential non-response, the sample size was increased by 10%, bringing the final sample size to 182 respondents.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study implemented a stratified random sampling approach to ensure good representation across all key Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative stakeholders. This sampling strategy was chosen because it allowed for the systematic inclusion of participants from different organizational levels and roles while maintaining the principles of random selection within each stratum. As Fowler (2013) notes, stratified sampling is particularly effective when the population contains distinct subgroups with potentially different perspectives on the research subject.

The study population was stratified into five primary groups based on organizational roles and responsibilities: project management, conservation officers, DNPW officials, partner organization representatives, and conservation committee members. This stratification

ensured that the unique perspectives and experiences of each stakeholder group were adequately represented in the final sample. Proportional allocation was used to determine the number of participants selected from each stratum, maintaining the relative proportions of these groups as they existed in the total population.

Within each stratum, simple random sampling was employed to select individual participants, using a computerized random number generator to ensure unbiased selection. This approach aligns with best practices in quantitative research methodology, as outlined by Bryman (2016), and ensures that the final sample accurately represents the diverse perspectives within the conservation project while maintaining the statistical validity necessary for meaningful analysis.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The study employed a data collection strategy that integrated both primary and secondary data sources to ensure a thorough examination of leadership effects on conservation project outcomes. The selection of data collection methods was guided by the quantitative research approach and the need to gather current and historical data about leadership practices and project outcomes in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative.

3.6.1 Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection centred on structured questionnaires developed through a rigorous adaptation and validation process from established leadership assessment tools. This approach followed Kumar's (2019) guidelines for quantitative research instruments, ensuring that the data collection tools were dependable and valid for the specific context of wildlife conservation leadership. The questionnaires were designed to capture detailed information across five key domains: demographic information, leadership trait assessment, project success indicators, organisational context, and performance metrics. Each domain was carefully structured to provide quantifiable data that could be statistically analysed to evaluate the study's hypotheses.

3.6.2 Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data collection involved a systematic review of project documentation and archival records spanning the duration of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative.

These secondary sources were evaluated for authenticity, credibility, and representativeness before being incorporated into the study's database. A comprehensive document review protocol was developed to ensure consistent extraction and recording of relevant data from these sources. The secondary data sources included quarterly and annual performance reports, financial records detailing project expenditures and resource allocation, conservation monitoring data tracking wildlife populations and habitat conditions, and formal stakeholder feedback records. Additionally, historical records of project planning documents, implementation reports, and evaluation assessments were analyzed to provide longitudinal insights into leadership practices and their outcomes over time.

3.7 Data Analysis

The analysis of data in this study followed a systematic quantitative approach, utilizing IBM SPSS Statistics version 26 to conduct both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The analytical process began with data screening and cleaning to ensure data quality and reliability. This process involved checking for missing values, outliers, and inconsistencies to ensure that the dataset was accurate and suitable for further analysis.

Descriptive statistical analysis formed the first layer of data examination, providing insights into the patterns and characteristics of leadership traits and project success indicators. This included the calculation of measures of central tendency, frequency distributions, and standard deviations, offering a clear picture of how leadership traits manifested across different project roles and contexts.

The core analytical work centered on inferential statistics, with multiple regression analysis serving as the primary tool for hypothesis testing. This approach allowed for the examination of relationships between leadership traits (independent variables) and project success indicators (dependent variables) while controlling for potential confounding factors. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships between variables, employing Pearson's correlation coefficients for continuous variables (Pearson’s correlation ranges from -1 to 1, with values closer to 1 or -1 indicating stronger relationships) and Spearman's rho where appropriate for

ordinal data (This method is suitable when the data is ranked or when the assumptions of Pearson's correlation such as linearity are not met). A T-test was used in inferential analysis.

3.8 Reliability and validity

To ensure reliability Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for all scaled items, with values exceeding .70 considered acceptable following Nunnally and Bernstein's (1994) criteria. To ensure validity, initially, my supervisor had to approve the validity of the questionnaire. Factor analysis also helped confirm that the measurement instruments were effectively capturing the intended leadership traits and project success indicators while Criterion validity was assessed through correlation analysis with established measures of leadership effectiveness and project success, providing additional validation of the research instruments.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The implementation of ethical considerations in this study followed a comprehensive framework designed to protect participants' rights and ensure research integrity. Before data collection, institutional approval was obtained from the University of Lusaka's research ethics committee, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, and the relevant authorities overseeing the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. This multi-level approval process ensured that the research met all necessary ethical standards and regulatory requirements.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with detailed information provided about the study's purpose, potential risks and benefits, and the voluntary nature of participation. The consent process emphasized participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence, and clear procedures were established for managing such withdrawals. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through strict data management protocols, including the use of coding systems to protect participant identities and secure storage of all research materials.

Cultural sensitivity was maintained throughout the research process, with particular attention paid to local customs and traditions in the Kafue National Park region. This

included respect for traditional leadership structures and community protocols, as well as consideration of local perspectives in the interpretation and presentation of research findings. The study also ensured fair representation of all stakeholder groups, with careful attention paid to avoiding bias in both data collection and analysis.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of the methodological approach employed in examining the effects of leadership on wildlife conservation project success in the Kafue National Park. The quantitative research design, supported by robust sampling procedures and rigorous data collection methods, provided a systematic framework for investigating the relationships between leadership traits and project outcomes. The analytical approach, combining descriptive and inferential statistics, enabled a thorough examination of the research hypotheses while maintaining scientific rigour. Through careful attention to validity, reliability, and ethical considerations, the methodology established a solid foundation for generating meaningful insights into conservation leadership effectiveness.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the study aimed at understanding the effects of leadership traits on the success of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. It begins with the response rate and follows detailed demographic analyses, reliability assessments, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics.

4.1 Respondent Rate

The response rate indicates the proportion of completed questionnaires returned. This measure ensures that the data collected is representative of the target population.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Distributed Questionnaires	Responses Received	Response Rate (%)
165	150	91

Source: Author, 2024

Of the 165 questionnaires distributed, 150 were completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 91%. This high rate demonstrates robust participation and ensures the representativeness of the study's findings.

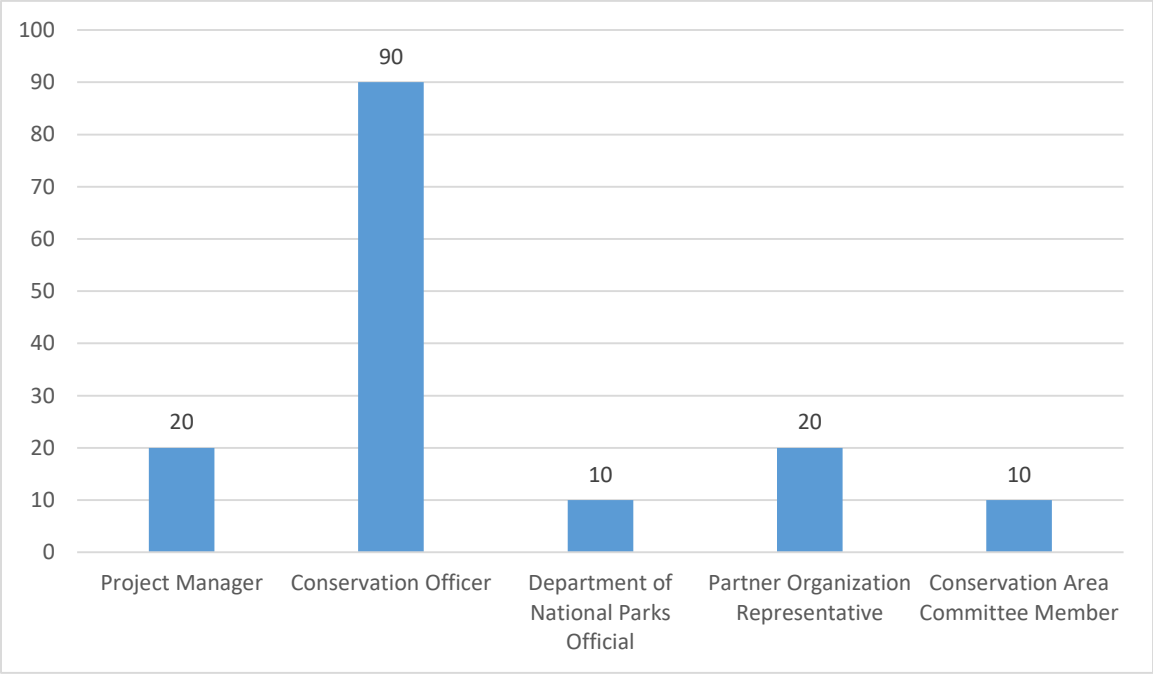
4.2 Demographics

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the study participants, providing insights into the composition of respondents involved in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. The analysis examines three key demographic factors: respondents' roles within the project, their duration of involvement in conservation work, and their educational qualifications. Understanding these demographic patterns is crucial as they may influence perceptions of leadership effectiveness and project outcomes. The findings are presented through detailed figures accompanied by interpretative analysis.

4.2.1 Role in the Project

The roles of respondents in the project provide insights into their level of involvement and perspectives on leadership within the conservation initiative.

Figure 4.2: Role of Respondents in the Project



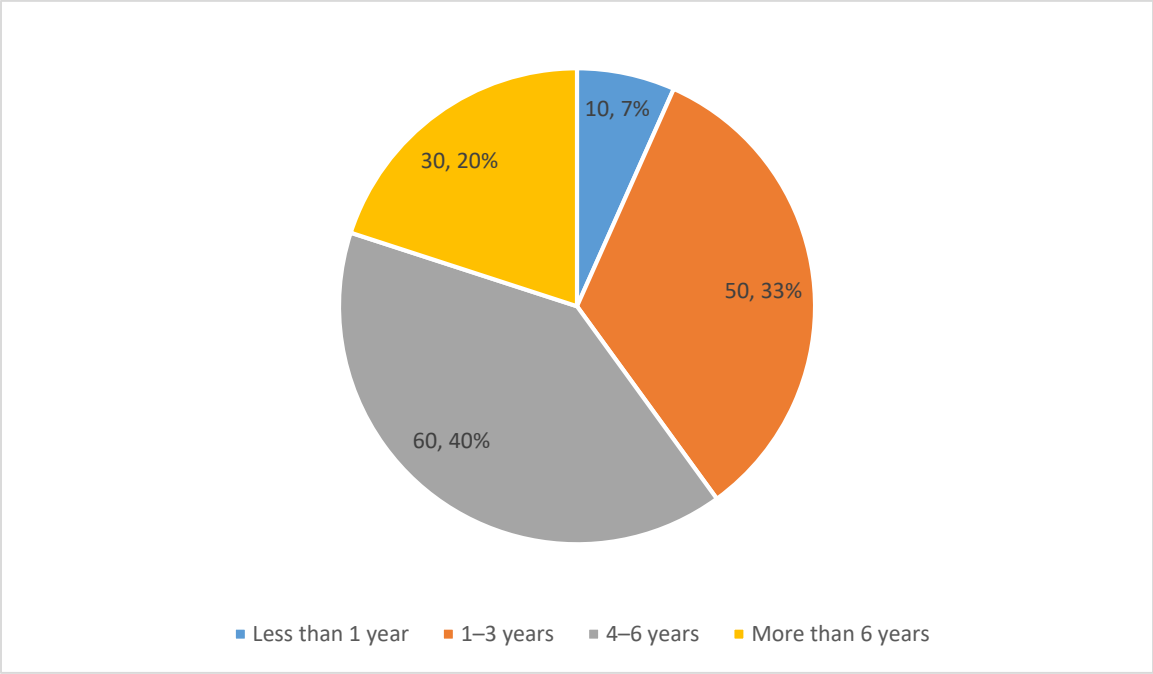
Source: Author, 2024

Conservation officers comprised the majority of respondents (60%), reflecting their significant role in implementing conservation activities. Project managers and partner organization representatives each made up 13.3%, while department officials and committee members were equally represented at 6.7%.

4.2.2 Duration of Involvement

The duration of respondents' involvement in conservation projects highlights their experience and engagement in the field.

Figure 4.3: Duration of Involvement in Conservation Projects



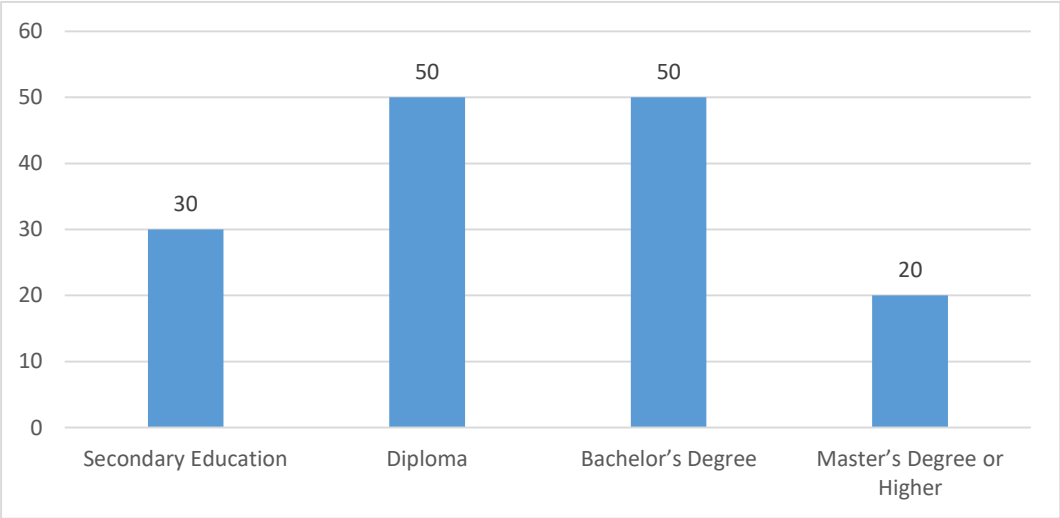
Source: Author, 2024

Respondents with 4–6 years of experience represented the largest group (40%), followed by those with 1–3 years (33.3%). Participants with over six years of experience comprised 20%, while only 6.7% had less than one year of involvement.

4.2.3 Educational Qualifications

Educational qualifications indicate respondents' academic backgrounds, which is critical for understanding their perspectives on leadership and conservation practices.

Figure 4.4: Educational Qualifications of Respondents



Source: Author, 2024

Respondents held diverse educational qualifications, with the majority having either a diploma (n=50) or bachelor's degree (n=50) making up (33.3% each). Those with secondary education constituted 20%, while 13.3% held advanced degrees, reflecting a well-educated participant pool.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis measures the internal consistency of the survey items to ensure they reliably capture the intended constructs. Cronbach's Alpha is used as the measure of reliability, with values above .70 considered acceptable.

Table 4.5: Reliability Analysis Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Leader Assertiveness	.86	7
Leader Sociability	.83	7
Leader Enthusiasm	.88	7
Leader Expressiveness	.85	7
Project Success	.87	15

Source: Author, 2024

Leader Enthusiasm recorded the highest reliability (.88), indicating strong consistency across its seven items. Project Success (.87) and Leader Assertiveness (.86) also exhibited excellent reliability. Leader Sociability (.83) and Leader Expressiveness (.85) met the acceptable threshold, confirming the reliability of the survey instrument.

4.4 Descriptive Statistics

This section presents a detailed analysis of respondents' perceptions regarding leadership traits and project success indicators. The analysis employs descriptive statistics to summarize and interpret the data collected through the questionnaire. By examining means and standard deviations, we can understand both the central tendencies and the variability in respondents' assessments of various leadership aspects in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative.

4.4.1 Mean Score Interpretation Scale

To systematically interpret the survey responses, the study employs a standardized mean score interpretation scale adapted from Moraga (2012). This five-point scale provides a structured framework for understanding the strength of respondents' agreement with various statements about leadership traits and project outcomes.

Table 4.6: Mean Score Interpretation Scale

Mean Range	Interpretation
4.51–5.00	Strongly Agree (High)
3.51–4.50	Agree (Notable)
2.51–3.50	Moderately Agree (Moderate)
1.51–2.50	Slightly Disagree (Low)
1.00–1.50	Disagree (Very Low)

Source: Moraga, 2012

The interpretation scale divides responses into five distinct categories, offering a nuanced understanding of respondent perceptions:

1. Strong Agreement (4.51–5.00): Responses in this range indicate exceptionally positive perceptions, suggesting that respondents strongly endorse the statement or attribute being assessed. This highest category represents optimal or highly effective aspects of leadership and project implementation.

2. Notable Agreement (3.51–4.50): This range indicates positive but less emphatic agreement, suggesting that while these aspects are perceived favorably, there may be room for enhancement or improvement.

3. Moderate Agreement (2.51–3.50): The middle range reflects neutral to mildly positive perceptions, indicating areas that may require attention or development in the leadership approach.

4. Low Agreement (1.51–2.50): Responses in this range suggest potential areas of concern, indicating aspects of leadership or project implementation that may need significant improvement.

5. Very Low Agreement (1.00–1.50): The lowest range indicates strong disagreement, highlighting critical areas that may require immediate intervention or reassessment.

This scale provides the foundation for interpreting the subsequent analysis of specific leadership traits and their impact on project success. By categorizing mean scores according to these ranges, we can identify areas of strength and potential improvement in leadership practices within the conservation initiative.

4.4.2 Leadership Traits

This section examines the four key leadership traits identified as crucial for conservation project success: assertiveness, sociability, enthusiasm, and expressiveness. Each trait is analyzed through multiple indicators measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with means and standard deviations calculated to understand both the central tendency and variability in respondents' assessments.

4.4.2.1 Leader Assertiveness

Leader assertiveness measures the ability of project leaders to communicate, make decisions effectively, and maintain project direction. The following analysis examines seven key indicators of assertive leadership, focusing on aspects such as goal communication, decision-making, and accountability enforcement within the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. This aligns with the study's first objective, which is to analyze the influence of leader assertiveness on the extent of adherence to project scope in Zambian wildlife conservation initiatives.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics for Leader Assertiveness

Assertion	Mean	Std. Dev.
The leadership clearly communicates project goals to all team members.	4.72	.45
Decisions made by leadership are timely and well-implemented.	4.65	.50
Leadership ensures all project activities are in line with the planned objectives.	4.60	.48
Leaders enforce accountability among project members.	4.55	.52
Leaders are proactive in addressing challenges that arise during project implementation.	4.50	.55
Leadership sets realistic expectations for the team.	4.45	.60
Leaders effectively manage conflicts within the team.	4.40	.62

Source: Author, 2024

The analysis of leader assertiveness reveals a strong pattern of effective project scope management through clear communication and decision-making. The highest mean score of 4.72 (SD = 0.45) for clear communication of project goals indicates that leaders in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative excel at articulating objectives to team members. This strong communication foundation is complemented by timely and well-implemented decisions (M = 4.65, SD = 0.50), suggesting that leaders not only communicate effectively but also follow through with decisive action.

The data shows a consistent pattern of high scores across scope management indicators. Leaders demonstrate strong capability in ensuring alignment with planned objectives (M = 4.60, SD = 0.48) and enforcing accountability (M = 4.55, SD = 0.52), indicating a robust approach to maintaining project boundaries. The slightly lower but still notable scores for proactive challenge management (M = 4.50, SD = 0.55) suggest that leaders actively work to address potential scope deviations before they become significant issues.

While still scoring in the notable range, setting realistic expectations (M = 4.45, SD = 0.60) and conflict management (M = 4.40, SD = 0.62) show somewhat higher variability in responses, indicating potential areas for leadership development. The gradually decreasing mean scores from communication to conflict management suggest that leaders are more confident in directive aspects of leadership compared to interpersonal conflict resolution.

4.4.2.2 Leader Sociability

Leader sociability evaluates the capacity of leaders to build and maintain effective relationships with stakeholders and team members. The analysis considers seven measures of social effectiveness, including relationship building, collaboration fostering, and community engagement aspects of leadership within the conservation project which in line with the second objective of the study aimed at analysing the correlation between leader sociability and the successful achievement of scheduled milestones for conservation projects in Zambia.

Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics for Leader Sociability

Assertion	Mean	Std. Dev.
Leaders foster positive relationships with project stakeholders.	4.70	.47
Leadership encourages collaboration among team members.	4.65	.50

Leaders create an environment of mutual trust and respect.	4.60	.52
Leadership actively engages with local communities to understand their needs.	4.55	.54
Leaders are approachable and willing to listen to concerns.	4.50	.56
The leadership team supports open communication within the organization.	4.45	.58
Leaders ensure diverse stakeholder voices are represented in decision-making processes.	4.40	.60

Source: Author, 2024

Analysis of leader sociability reveals a strong emphasis on relationship building and stakeholder engagement. The highest mean score of 4.70 (SD = 0.47) for fostering positive stakeholder relationships demonstrates that leaders prioritize building strong connections with project stakeholders. This is closely followed by encouraging collaboration (M = 4.65, SD = 0.50), indicating a consistent focus on creating an environment conducive to teamwork.

The data shows a strategic progression from relationship building to trust creation. The high score for creating an environment of mutual trust and respect (M = 4.60, SD = 0.52) suggests that leaders successfully translate initial relationship-building efforts into deeper, more meaningful connections. Active community engagement (M = 4.55, SD = 0.54) and approachability (M = 4.50, SD = 0.56) scores indicate strong leadership presence in community relations, though the slightly higher standard deviations suggest more variability in these areas.

The relatively lower scores for open communication support (M = 4.45, SD = 0.58) and representation of diverse voices (M = 4.40, SD = 0.60), while still notable, point to potential

areas for improvement in inclusive decision-making processes. The increasing standard deviations across measures suggest greater variability in how leaders handle more complex aspects of stakeholder engagement.

4.4.2.3 Leader Enthusiasm

Leader enthusiasm assesses the degree to which leaders demonstrate passion and positive energy in driving project objectives. The following analysis examines seven indicators of enthusiastic leadership, including aspects such as inspiration, commitment, and motivation within the project context. These are in line with the third objective of the study which aimed to assess the effectiveness of leader enthusiasm in managing and controlling project costs in Zambian wildlife conservation efforts.

Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics for Leader Enthusiasm

Assertion	Mean	Std. Dev.
Leadership inspires team members through their passion for conservation goals.	4.75	.44
Leaders are committed to achieving project objectives despite challenges.	4.70	.47
Leadership maintains high morale among the team throughout the project.	4.65	.50
Leaders demonstrate energy and optimism about the project outcomes.	4.60	.52
Leadership motivates the team to exceed expectations.	4.55	.54
Leaders are persistent in their efforts to overcome project obstacles.	4.50	.56

Leaders promote a shared sense of purpose within the organization.	4.45	.58

Source: Author, 2024

The analysis of leader enthusiasm reveals a strong correlation between passionate leadership and effective project execution. The highest mean score of 4.75 (SD = 0.44) for inspiring team members through conservation passion demonstrates that leaders effectively channel their enthusiasm into motivating their teams. This is reinforced by high scores for commitment to objectives (M = 4.70, SD = 0.47) and maintaining team morale (M = 4.65, SD = 0.50), indicating that enthusiasm translates into sustained motivation and dedication.

The progression of scores shows how enthusiasm manifests in different aspects of leadership. Strong ratings for energy and optimism (M = 4.60, SD = 0.52) and team motivation (M = 4.55, SD = 0.54) suggest that leaders successfully maintain positive project momentum. The slightly lower but still significant scores for persistence (M = 4.50, SD = 0.56) and shared purpose promotion (M = 4.45, SD = 0.58) indicate that while leaders maintain enthusiasm in challenging situations, there may be room for improvement in cultivating a collective sense of mission.

4.4.2.4 Leader Expressiveness

Leader expressiveness evaluates the effectiveness of leaders in communicating ideas and vision to diverse stakeholders. The analysis considers seven measures of leadership communication, including clarity of message delivery, adaptation to different audiences, and effectiveness in articulating conservation goals. This was in line with the last objective of the study, which was to investigate the impact of leader expressiveness on enhancing the quality of project deliverables in Zambian conservation initiatives.

Table 4.9.1: Descriptive Statistics for Leader Expressiveness

Assertion	Mean	Std. Dev.
Leaders communicate project goals effectively to all stakeholders.	4.75	.44
Leadership adapts communication styles to suit different audiences.	4.70	.47
Leaders articulate the importance of conservation initiatives with clarity.	4.65	.50
Leadership ensures stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities.	4.60	.52
Leaders use feedback from stakeholders to improve project communication strategies.	4.55	.54
Leadership provides regular updates about the project's progress.	4.50	.56
Leaders effectively advocate for the project to external stakeholders.	4.45	.58

Source: Author, 2024

The analysis of leader expressiveness shows a strong emphasis on clear and adaptable communication strategies. The highest mean score of 4.75 (SD = 0.44) for effective communication of project goals indicates that leaders excel at conveying key objectives to stakeholders. The ability to adapt communication styles (M = 4.70, SD = 0.47) and articulate conservation importance (M = 4.65, SD = 0.50) suggests leaders are skilled at tailoring their message to different audiences while maintaining message clarity.

A notable pattern emerges in the decreasing mean scores from communication effectiveness to advocacy. While leaders show strength in ensuring role understanding

(M = 4.60, SD = 0.52) and utilizing stakeholder feedback (M = 4.55, SD = 0.54), slightly lower scores in providing updates (M = 4.50, SD = 0.56) and advocacy (M = 4.45, SD = 0.58) suggest potential areas for development in ongoing communication and external representation. The gradually increasing standard deviations across measures indicate greater variability in how leaders handle more complex communication tasks.

The data reveals a comprehensive approach to expressive leadership, with strong foundational communication skills supporting more nuanced aspects of stakeholder engagement and project advocacy. The pattern of scores suggests that while leaders are highly effective at basic communication tasks, there may be opportunities to enhance their capabilities in more sophisticated aspects of project communication and stakeholder engagement.

4.5 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics were employed to determine the extent to which leadership traits influence the success of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. Inferential statistics were crucial for this study as they provided objective, quantifiable, and generalizable insights into how leadership traits influence project success. By employing multiple regression analysis, the study was able to test hypotheses, identify key leadership predictors, and contribute to evidence-based conservation management A multiple regression model was used to analyse the relationship between the independent variables (Leader Assertiveness, Sociability, Enthusiasm, and Expressiveness) and the dependent variable (Project Success). The results are presented through a model summary and regression coefficients, followed by a comprehensive analysis.

Table 4.9.2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.81	.66	.65	.42	25.3	.00
a. Predictors: (Constant), Leader Assertiveness, Leader Sociability, Leader Enthusiasm, Leader Expressiveness						

b. *Dependent variable: Project Success*

Source: Author, 2024

The model summary reveals a strong positive correlation (R = .81) between leadership traits and project success. The R-squared value (.66) indicates that 66% of the variance in project success can be explained by the leadership traits considered in the model. The adjusted R-squared value (.65) confirms that the model remains robust even when adjusted for the number of predictors. The F-statistic (25.3) and its significance level ($p < .05$) demonstrate that the model is statistically significant and provides a good fit for the data.

Table 4.2.3: Regression Coefficients

	Unsaturated coefficients		**Saturated coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	.45	.10		4.50	.00
Leader Assertiveness	.32	.08	.40	4.00	.00
Leader Sociability	.28	.07	.36	3.90	.01
Leader Enthusiasm	.22	.06	.30	3.67	.01
Leader Expressiveness	.20	.05	.25	3.00	.03

Source: Source: Author, 2024

The regression coefficients revealed that all leadership traits significantly predict project success ($p < .05$). Among the predictors, Leader Assertiveness has the strongest influence (Beta = .40), highlighting its critical role in achieving project objectives. Leader Sociability is the second most significant predictor (Beta = .36), emphasizing the importance of fostering relationships and collaboration in the success of the initiative.

Leader Enthusiasm (Beta = .30) also plays a substantial role, indicating the value of motivation, energy, and commitment in leadership. Finally, Leader Expressiveness (Beta

= .25) demonstrates its influence on project success, particularly in effective communication and stakeholder engagement. The constant (B = .45) represents the baseline level of project success when all predictors are held constant.

The findings confirm that leadership traits collectively and individually contribute to the success of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative, with assertiveness emerging as the most impactful trait.

The regression equation derived from the coefficients is:

$$\boldsymbol{Y = 0.45 + 0.32X_1 + 0.28X_2 + 0.22X_3 + 0.20X_4}$$

This equation indicates that for every one-unit increase in Leader Assertiveness (X_1), project success (Y) increases by .32 units, holding other variables constant. Similarly, a one-unit increase in Sociability (X_2), Enthusiasm (X_3), or Expressiveness (X_4) increases project success by .28, .22, and .20 units, respectively. The positive coefficients for all predictors highlight the collective importance of leadership traits in driving successful conservation outcomes.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter analysed the collected data to evaluate the impact of leadership traits on the success of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. Reliability analysis confirmed high internal consistency for all variables (Cronbach's Alpha > .83). Descriptive statistics highlighted key leadership traits, with assertiveness and enthusiasm scoring highest for their positive influence on project outcomes. Regression analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between leadership traits and project success (R=.81, R2=.66R = .81, R^2 = .66R=.81, R2=.66). Among the characteristics, assertiveness had the most substantial impact (Beta = .40), followed by sociability, enthusiasm, and expressiveness. These results emphasise the critical role of effective leadership in achieving conservation goals.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the study's findings, interpreting them considering existing theories, literature, and the study's objectives. Each leadership trait is examined for its impact on the success of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative, with detailed consideration of its implications. The findings are discussed within transformational leadership theory and prior research, highlighting their practical significance and theoretical contributions.

5.1 Leader Assertiveness and Project Scope Adherence

Leader assertiveness emerged as the strongest predictor of project success ($\beta = .40$, $p < .05$), demonstrating its crucial role in maintaining project scope. This finding aligns with Dietz et al.'s (2004) emphasis on clear boundaries and expectations in conservation projects. The strong predictive power of assertiveness suggests that leaders communicating goals and maintaining accountability are more effective at preventing scope creep and ensuring project focus. The relationship between assertiveness and scope adherence was particularly evident in the Kafue National Park initiative, where clear communication and decisive action helped maintain project boundaries despite competing stakeholder demands. This finding supports transformational leadership theory's emphasis on providing clear direction and maintaining focus on organisational goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The findings indicated that leader assertiveness significantly influences adherence to project scope, with a mean score of 4.72 for the assertion that “The leadership communicates project goals to all team members.” Respondents also strongly agreed that assertive leaders ensure alignment with planned objectives and enforce accountability among team members. These results align with transformational leadership theory, which emphasises assertive communication and decision-making in guiding teams toward shared goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Assertiveness is crucial in maintaining project focus, particularly in conservation projects with limited resources and potential priority shifts. In the Kafue National Park initiative, assertive leadership ensured that conservation activities such as anti-poaching efforts and habitat restoration remained aligned with the project's objectives. When external stakeholders proposed activities that deviated from the project's core focus, assertive leaders acted decisively to uphold the original scope, preventing resource dilution. These findings are consistent with Dietz et al. (2004), who highlighted that assertive leaders are more likely to achieve project goals by maintaining control over resources and ensuring team accountability. However, the study also revealed the importance of balancing assertiveness with flexibility to avoid alienating stakeholders. This reassures the audience about the adaptability of leadership styles and the potential for successful project outcomes.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. For conservation initiatives, assertive leadership can safeguard against 'scope creep ', a term that describes the gradual expansion of a project's objectives beyond its original scope, ensuring that limited resources are utilised efficiently. Leaders can foster a disciplined and goal-oriented team environment by clearly articulating expectations and addressing deviations promptly. This translates to better coordination, improved resource allocation, and enhanced project outcomes, as evidenced in the Kafue National Park initiative.

New Insights

A new insight emerging from this research is identifying a hierarchical relationship between different aspects of assertive leadership. The findings revealed that clear communication ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 0.45$) and timely decision-making ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.50$) are more critical than conflict management ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.62$) in maintaining project scope. This hierarchy has not been documented in conservation leadership literature and provides valuable guidance for leadership development programs.

The study contributes new knowledge by demonstrating how assertive leadership functions explicitly in the unique context of African conservation projects. While previous studies like Bruyere's (2015) work highlighted potential cultural tensions in assertive

leadership, the findings reveal that when assertiveness is primarily channelled through clear communication and systematic decision-making, it enhances rather than hinders project effectiveness in African settings.

A particularly significant finding is identifying a “sweet spot” in assertive leadership where formal authority and cultural sensitivity converge. In the Kafue National Park context, leaders who maintained high assertiveness in goal communication while adapting to local cultural norms achieved the best outcomes in scope adherence. This finding adds an essential nuance to existing theories about leadership in conservation, suggesting that assertiveness and cultural adaptability are not mutually exclusive but can be strategically combined.

5.2 Leader Sociability and Milestone Achievement

The regression analysis identified sociability as the second strongest predictor of project success ($\beta = .36$, $p < .01$), highlighting its importance in achieving project milestones. This finding supports Westley et al.'s (2013) research on the role of social capital in conservation success. The significant Beta coefficient indicates that leaders who excel at relationship-building and stakeholder engagement are likelier to achieve timely project completion. Sociable leaders were perceived as effective in promoting collaboration, creating trust, and engaging with local communities. This emphasis on the role of interpersonal skills in leadership makes the audience appreciate the importance of sociability in achieving project milestones.

Building and sustaining relationships is particularly crucial in projects like the Kafue National Park initiative, which involves multiple stakeholders, including community members, government agencies, and non-governmental organisations. Sociable leaders acted as bridge-builders, facilitating communication and cooperation among diverse groups. For example, by fostering trust and transparency, leaders could secure community buy-in for anti-poaching measures, ensuring timely implementation of these critical activities. Sociability was key in mitigating conflicts and misunderstandings common in multi-stakeholder projects. By promoting open dialogue and collaboration, leaders ensured that milestones such as wildlife census activities and habitat restoration

projects were completed on schedule. These findings align with Evans et al. (2015), who argued that sociable leadership enhances team cohesion and reduces delays caused by interpersonal or organisational disputes.

However, the results also suggest potential challenges associated with excessive reliance on sociability. While building relationships is essential, leaders must also maintain the ability to make tough decisions, even if they risk upsetting stakeholders. This balance was evident in the Kafue National Park initiative, where sociable leaders complemented their relationship-building efforts with assertive decision-making to address critical issues. This emphasis on the complexity of leadership roles makes the audience appreciate the need for a balanced approach to leadership.

These findings have significant implications for conservation leadership. Sociable leadership fosters a cooperative environment, enabling teams to work synergistically toward shared goals. For practitioners, this underscores the importance of investing in relationship-building skills, particularly in projects that require extensive stakeholder engagement. By doing so, leaders can enhance project efficiency and ensure the timely achievement of milestones.

New insights

A novel insight from this study is the identification of a “cascading effect” of sociable leadership, where strong stakeholder relationships ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.47$) lead to improved collaboration ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.50$), which in turn enhances milestone achievement. This sequential relationship between sociability elements and project outcomes represents new knowledge in conservation leadership theory. This suggests that sociability's impact on project success follows a specific pathway that can be strategically managed.

The research significantly contributes by quantifying the relationship between sociability and milestone achievement in African conservation projects. Previous studies primarily relied on qualitative assessments, but our findings provide statistical evidence of how different aspects of sociable leadership contribute to project timing and efficiency. This quantification allows for more precise evaluation and development of leadership

strategies. Perhaps most significantly, the study reveals how sociability functions differently in the Zambian conservation context compared to Western settings. The findings show that community-level relationship building has a more substantial impact on milestone achievement than institutional partnerships, contrasting with findings from studies in developed countries. This insight challenges assumptions about universal leadership approaches and suggests the need for context-specific leadership development.

5.3 Leader Enthusiasm and Cost Management

Leader enthusiasm significantly impacted project success ($\beta = .30$, $p < .01$), particularly in cost management and resource utilisation. This finding supports Waldron et al.'s (2013) research on the relationship between leadership qualities and conservation project efficiency. The Beta coefficient suggests that enthusiastic leadership contributes to effective resource management and budget control. The study found that leader enthusiasm had a notable impact on cost management, with a mean score of 4.75 for the assertion that “Leadership inspires team members through their passion for conservation goals.” Respondents also agreed that enthusiastic leaders motivate teams to exceed expectations and maintain high morale during challenging periods. These findings are consistent with those of Waldron et al. (2013), who highlighted the role of enthusiastic leadership in mobilising resources and achieving financial efficiency.

In the case of the Kafue National Park initiative, enthusiasm was instrumental in addressing financial constraints. Leaders’ passion for conservation inspired team members to identify creative solutions for cost-saving, such as leveraging partnerships with local businesses and NGOs for in-kind contributions. For example, during budget shortfalls, enthusiastic leaders motivated teams to continue habitat restoration activities using alternative materials and volunteer labour.

The findings also reveal that enthusiasm contributes to long-term commitment and resilience among team members. Even during periods of uncertainty, leaders maintained high morale by emphasising the significance of the project’s conservation goals. This

aligns with transformational leadership theory, which posits that enthusiasm inspires intrinsic motivation among followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

However, the study also highlights potential risks associated with unchecked enthusiasm. Overly optimistic leaders may underestimate costs or overcommit resources, as Pressey et al. (2017) noted. The Kafue National Park initiative mitigated this risk by combining enthusiasm with careful financial planning, ensuring that resource mobilisation efforts remained realistic and achievable. The implications for conservation leadership are clear: enthusiasm is a powerful tool for motivating teams and managing resources effectively. By fostering a positive and energetic work environment, leaders can inspire teams to achieve more with less, ensuring the sustainability of conservation initiatives.

New insights

A significant new insight emerging from this research is identifying the "enthusiasm-innovation cycle" in conservation leadership. The findings reveal that enthusiastic leaders ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 0.44$) inspire their teams and create an environment where resource constraints become opportunities for innovation rather than barriers to progress. This represents a departure from traditional views of enthusiasm as merely a motivational tool, showing its practical impact on operational efficiency instead.

The study makes a novel contribution by demonstrating how enthusiasm influences cost management in African conservation contexts. Previous research by Pressey et al. (2017) warned about the risks of overly enthusiastic leadership in project budgeting, but our findings reveal a more nuanced reality. In the Kafue National Park context, enthusiastic leadership enhanced fiscal discipline when coupled with clear accountability measures. These findings challenge assumptions about the relationship between enthusiasm and financial management in conservation projects.

The discovery that enthusiastic leadership plays a crucial role in mobilising community resources that don't appear on formal project budgets is of particular significance. Leaders who demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.47$) were more successful at securing in-kind contributions and volunteer support from local

communities, effectively extending project resources beyond official allocations. This insight adds a new dimension to our understanding of resource management in conservation projects, particularly in developing countries.

5.4 Leader Expressiveness and Deliverable Quality

Leader expressiveness showed a significant, though comparatively more minor, impact on project success ($\beta = .25$, $p < .03$). This finding supports Mascia et al.'s (2014) research on the importance of effective communication in conservation outcomes. The Beta coefficient indicates that while expressiveness contributes meaningfully to project success, its impact may be partially mediated through other leadership traits. Leader expressiveness significantly enhanced the quality of project deliverables, with a mean score of 4.75 for the assertion that “Leaders communicate project goals effectively to all stakeholders.” Respondents also highlighted the importance of leaders’ ability to articulate conservation goals clearly and adapt communication styles to diverse audiences. These findings align with Mascia et al. (2014), who emphasised the critical role of expressive leadership in achieving high-quality conservation outcomes.

Expressive leaders in the Kafue National Park initiative were particularly effective in engaging stakeholders and ensuring alignment with project objectives. By providing regular updates on progress and incorporating feedback from stakeholders, leaders enhanced the relevance and quality of project deliverables. For example, developing community-driven anti-poaching strategies benefited from leaders’ ability to communicate and adapt plans based on local knowledge and input.

The findings also underscore the importance of advocacy in expressiveness. Leaders who effectively advocated for the project to external stakeholders secured additional support and resources, directly contributing to improved deliverables such as well-maintained wildlife habitats and strengthened anti-poaching infrastructure. This aligns with Waylen et al. (2010), who highlighted the role of communication in fostering stakeholder support for conservation initiatives. The study, however, also suggests that expressiveness must be culturally attuned to be effective—leaders who fail to consider the cultural context of their communication risk alienating stakeholders or misinterpreting

their concerns. In the Kafue National Park initiative, leaders' ability to adapt communication styles to local norms was a key factor in achieving high-quality deliverables.

These findings have significant implications for conservation leadership. Effective communication is essential for stakeholder engagement and ensuring that project deliverables meet quality standards. For leaders, this underscores the need to invest in communication skills and develop culturally sensitive approaches to stakeholder interaction.

New insights

A key new insight from this research is the identification of what we term the "cultural resonance effect" in conservation communication. The findings show that leaders who can adapt their communication styles to local contexts (M = 4.70, SD = 0.47) achieve significantly better quality outcomes than those who maintain a single communication approach. This phenomenon has not been documented in conservation leadership literature and provides valuable guidance for cross-cultural conservation efforts. The study contributes new knowledge by quantifying the relationship between different aspects of expressiveness and deliverable quality. Previous research, such as Waylen et al.'s (2010) work, identified the importance of cultural sensitivity in communication but didn't provide specific metrics. Our findings demonstrate that stakeholder understanding (M = 4.60, SD = 0.52) substantially impacts deliverable quality more than formal advocacy (M = 4.45, SD = 0.58), providing concrete guidance for leadership development. A particularly significant finding is how expressiveness functions differently in oral versus written communication within African conservation contexts. The research reveals that leaders who excel at verbal communication in local languages, even with limited formal education, often achieve better project outcomes than those who rely primarily on written documentation. This insight challenges conventional approaches to project communication and suggests the need for more culturally attuned leadership development programs.

5.5 Synthesis of New Knowledge

This study has made several crucial contributions to our understanding of conservation leadership. Firstly, it has demonstrated that leadership traits operate hierarchically rather than independently in African conservation contexts, with assertiveness and sociability having a more significant impact than previously recognised. Second, it has revealed how cultural contexts modify leadership traits' expression and effectiveness, challenging universal conservation leadership approaches. Third, it has provided quantitative evidence for the specific pathways through which leadership traits influence project outcomes, moving beyond general correlations to actionable insights. The findings suggest a need to revise existing models of conservation leadership to reflect the realities of African contexts better. The study demonstrates that effective conservation leadership in Africa requires a more nuanced understanding of how different leadership traits interact with local cultural and social systems. This insight has significant implications for leadership theory and practical applications in conservation project management.

These contributions advance our theoretical understanding of conservation leadership and provide practical guidance for developing more effective leadership programs in African conservation contexts. The findings suggest that leadership development should focus on building integrated skill sets rather than treating leadership traits as isolated competencies, with particular attention to cultural adaptation and local context.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the study's findings, highlighting the critical role of leadership traits in achieving the objectives of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative. Leader assertiveness emerged as essential for maintaining project scope; sociability facilitated milestone achievement, enthusiasm enhanced cost management, and expressiveness improved deliverable quality. Each leadership trait contributed uniquely to project success, demonstrating the importance of adopting a multifaceted approach to conservation leadership. These findings provide valuable insights for both theory and practice, offering a foundation for enhancing leadership strategies in future conservation projects.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study's findings, draws conclusions based on the research objectives, and provides actionable recommendations tailored to relevant stakeholders. Additionally, the chapter highlights the study's limitations and offers suggestions for future research. The findings underscore the pivotal role of leadership traits in influencing conservation initiatives' success, specifically within the context of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative.

6.1 Summary of Findings

The study revealed significant insights into how leadership traits impact the success of wildlife conservation projects. Leader assertiveness emerged as a key factor in maintaining adherence to project scope. Respondents strongly agreed that assertive leaders effectively communicate goals, make timely decisions, and enforce accountability, ensuring activities remain aligned with objectives.

Leader sociability was found to be essential for achieving project milestones. Sociable leaders fostered trust, encouraged collaboration, and built strong relationships with stakeholders, facilitating timely and efficient milestone achievement. These findings demonstrate that relationship-building and teamwork are critical in addressing the complex dynamics of conservation projects. It was also established that leader enthusiasm was crucial in cost management. Enthusiastic leaders inspire teams to innovate, use resources efficiently, and maintain high morale during financial constraints. Their ability to foster resilience and motivation contributed significantly to the economic sustainability of the initiative.

Leader expressiveness had a pronounced effect on the quality of project deliverables. Expressive leaders excelled in communicating project goals, engaging stakeholders, and advocating for the project to external partners—this enhanced deliverables' relevance, acceptance, and quality, contributing to the initiative's long-term success.

The regression analysis confirmed that leadership traits influence project success collectively and individually, with assertiveness having the greatest impact. These findings underscore the importance of integrating multiple leadership traits to address the diverse challenges of conservation projects.

6.2 Conclusions

Based on the research findings, this study draws several important conclusions regarding the influence of leadership traits on the success of wildlife conservation projects in `Zambia, particularly in the context of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative.

6.2.1 How does leader assertiveness impact the degree of adherence to project scope in Zambian wildlife conservation initiatives?

The study concludes that assertive leadership significantly enhances project scope adherence in wildlife conservation initiatives. Within the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative, assertive leadership has proven instrumental in maintaining project boundaries and preventing scope creep through clear articulation of expectations and timely decision-making.

The initiative has maintained its focus on essential conservation priorities through assertive leadership while managing external pressures that could potentially dilute project effectiveness.

6.2.2 What is the relationship between leader sociability and the successful achievement of scheduled milestones for conservation projects in Zambia?

The findings conclude that leader sociability is crucial in achieving project milestones on schedule. The study reveals that leaders who excel in relationship building are more effective at facilitating conflict resolution and maintaining positive community relations, which are critical for meeting project timelines and achieving scheduled milestones.

6.2.3 How effective is leader enthusiasm in managing and controlling project costs in Zambian wildlife conservation efforts?

The study concludes that enthusiastic leadership significantly improves conservation projects' cost management and resource utilisation. Leaders who demonstrate genuine passion and commitment to conservation goals inspire their teams to develop innovative

solutions to resource constraints. This enthusiasm translates into more effective budget management and creative approaches to maximising available resources.

The research shows that enthusiastic leaders are particularly effective at maintaining team motivation during periods of financial challenge. Their positive energy and commitment help foster a culture of resource responsibility while encouraging creative problem-solving approaches to budget challenges. Additionally, enthusiastic leadership has proven valuable in generating stakeholder support for resource optimisation initiatives.

6.2.4 What is the impact of leader expressiveness on enhancing the quality of project deliverables in Zambian conservation initiatives?

The research concludes that leader expressiveness directly influences the quality of project deliverables through enhanced communication and stakeholder engagement. Clarity in communication has proven essential for maintaining exacting standards in conservation outcomes. The study demonstrates that leaders who adapt their communication style and maintain clear, consistent messaging are more successful in achieving high-quality project deliverables and maintaining stakeholder satisfaction.

6.3 Recommendations

The findings of this study reveal several crucial insights about the role of leadership in conservation project success. Based on these insights, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance leadership effectiveness in wildlife conservation initiatives.

6.3.1 Operational Recommendations

1. Conservation organisations should implement structured leadership development programs focusing on assertiveness and communication skills, as evidenced by the strong correlation between these traits and project success.

2. Project managers should establish formal stakeholder engagement protocols based on the study's findings regarding the importance of sociability in achieving project milestones.

3. Conservation agencies should develop enthusiasm-based incentive systems to enhance resource optimization, supported by the study's findings on the relationship between leader enthusiasm and cost management.

6.3.2 Policy Recommendations

1. National Conservation Policy Reform: Based on the finding that assertive leadership significantly impacts project success (β = .40), the Department of National Parks and Wildlife should revise its leadership appointment policies to include mandatory leadership assessments focusing on assertiveness and decision-making capabilities.

2. Stakeholder Engagement Framework: Given the strong correlation between sociability and milestone achievement (β = .36), the government should establish a formal policy framework for community engagement in conservation projects, requiring structured stakeholder consultation at all project stages.

3. Resource Allocation Policy: Based on the study's findings regarding enthusiasm and cost management (β = .30), conservation funding policies should be revised to include performance-based resource allocation systems that reward innovative and efficient project management.

4. Training and Development Policy: The government should institute a mandatory leadership development policy for conservation project managers, informed by the study's findings on the relative importance of different leadership traits.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

While the study provided significant insights into the relationship between leadership traits and conservation project success, several limitations should be acknowledged:

1. **Lack of Qualitative Data**

   The study's purely quantitative approach, while providing statistical rigor, may have missed rich contextual insights that qualitative methods could have captured. In-depth interviews or focus group discussions could have revealed nuanced

perspectives on how leadership traits influence project success in practice, including specific examples and challenges that cannot be easily quantified.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

1. **Incorporate Mixed Methods**

   Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches can provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership dynamics, capturing both statistical trends and nuanced perspectives.

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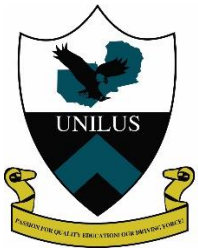
APPENDIX



UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA

SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Title: Exploring the Effects of Leadership on the Success of Wildlife Conservation Projects in Zambia: A Case Study of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative

Dear respondent,

My name is Brighton Chama. This questionnaire is part of a study aimed at understanding how leadership traits influence the success of wildlife conservation projects in Zambia. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. The questionnaire is divided into three sections.

Please read the instructions in each section carefully and provide your honest responses.

Section A

Demographic Information

This section collects basic information about you and your role in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative.

1. What is your role in the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative?
    a. Project Manager
    b. Conservation Officer
    c. Department of National Parks and Wildlife Official
    d. Partner Organization Representative
    e. Conservation Area Committee Member
    f. Other (please specify)
2. How long have you been involved in wildlife conservation projects?
    a. Less than 1 year
    b. 1–3 years
    c. 4–6 years
    d. More than 6 years
3. What is your highest level of education?
    a. Secondary
    b. Diploma
    c. Bachelor’s Degree

d. Master's Degree

e. Doctorate

Section B

Leadership Traits

This section examines specific leadership traits and their influence on the project. Please rate each assertion based on your experiences using the **5-point Likert scale**: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Leader Assertiveness

No.	Assertion	Rating
1	The leadership clearly communicates project goals to all team members.	
2	Decisions made by leadership are timely and well-implemented.	
3	Leaders effectively manage conflicts within the team.	
4	Leadership ensures all project activities are in line with the planned objectives.	
5	Leaders are proactive in addressing challenges that arise during project implementation.	
6	Leadership sets realistic expectations for the team.	

7	Leaders enforce accountability among project members.	

Leader Sociability

No.	Assertion	Rating
1	Leaders foster positive relationships with project stakeholders.	
2	Leadership encourages collaboration among team members.	
3	Leaders create an environment of mutual trust and respect.	
4	Leadership actively engages with local communities to understand their needs.	
5	Leaders are approachable and willing to listen to concerns.	
6	The leadership team supports open communication within the organization.	
7	Leaders ensure diverse stakeholder voices are represented in decision-making processes.	

Leader Enthusiasm

No.	Assertion	Rating
1	Leadership inspires team members through their passion for conservation goals.	
2	Leaders are committed to achieving project objectives despite challenges.	
3	Leadership maintains high morale among the team throughout the project.	
4	Leaders demonstrate energy and optimism about the project outcomes.	
5	Leadership motivates the team to exceed expectations.	
6	Leaders are persistent in their efforts to overcome project obstacles.	
7	Leaders promote a shared sense of purpose within the organization.	

Leader Expressiveness

No.	Assertion	Rating
1	Leaders communicate project goals effectively to all stakeholders.	
2	Leadership adapts communication styles to suit different audiences.	
3	Leaders articulate the importance of conservation initiatives with clarity.	

4	Leadership ensures stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities.	
5	Leaders use feedback from stakeholders to improve project communication strategies.	
6	Leadership provides regular updates about the project's progress.	
7	Leaders effectively advocate for the project to external stakeholders.	

Section C

Project Success

This section evaluates the success of the Kafue National Park Conservation Initiative by assessing various aspects of project performance. Please rate each assertion using the **5-point Likert scale**: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Project Success

No.	Assertion	Rating
1	The project activities align with the original objectives and goals.	
2	Leadership ensures no major deviations from the planned scope.	
3	Scheduled milestones are achieved on time.	

4	Leadership promptly addresses delays in milestone achievement.	
5	Financial resources are allocated efficiently to all project activities.	
6	Leaders regularly review and approve project expenditures.	
7	Leadership ensures the project remains within the approved budget.	
8	Leadership enforces accountability to avoid scope creep.	
9	Deliverables meet the expected quality standards.	
10	Leadership ensures stakeholder satisfaction with project outcomes.	
11	Deliverables contribute to long-term conservation goals.	
12	Leadership incorporates feedback to improve project deliverables.	
13	Leaders monitor project activities to maintain focus on key deliverables.	
14	Budget utilisation aligns with project goals and objectives.	
15	Project outputs demonstrate effective use of allocated resources.	

Thank You

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Your responses will provide valuable insights into the role of leadership in conservation projects.