

**ADOPTION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)
INITIATIVES IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION IN COMMUNITIES AROUND HWANGE NATIONAL
PARK, ZIMBABWE**

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Abstract

Though there are various Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives by the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA), through the Communal Areas Management of Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) and wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe is facing perennial challenges that range from illegal hunting, wildlife habitat fragmentation, and wildlife retaliatory killings. The main objective of the study is to assess the adoption of effective CSR initiatives on communities around Hwange National Park on wildlife conservation. A case study research design was used where the target population was communities living around Hwange National Park. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used. The data collected from questionnaires was analysed using SPSS and interview data was placed into thematic areas according to objectives. Findings were that there is a legal framework for CSR in place but the challenge is on its implementation. It was noted in the study that the community is not being involved in the conservation of wildlife. The findings also indicated that the economic situation is affecting the daily operation of Hwange National Park; hence, there is reduction of CSR funding which includes the provision of social services. From the study, it was observed that some of the infrastructure like boreholes and roads were no longer being serviced on time due to limited resources. The study recommends that the use of education and awareness campaigns are essential for the conservation of the resources in the protected area.

Keywords: *CAMPFIRE, corporate social responsibility, Hwange National Park, sustainable wildlife conservation and Zimbabwe.*

Introduction

This research sought to establish whether a nexus exists between sustainable development and CSR in the Hwange National Park Area. Globalization has forced many organizations to be more focused on corporate social responsibility

(Yusoff & Yee, 2014). There has been growing interests in taking CSR as a management phenomenon across a range of all business undertakings. It has been noted that the continued existence of many enterprises depends on how they perceive and relate with key stakeholders. Porter and Kramer (2012) support the existence of such relationship between business undertakings and society, since such organization's activities do have a direct impact on the local communities in which they operate.

Some research asserts that wildlife conservation initiatives are closely linked to local communities (Wali, Alvira, Tallman, Ravikumar, & Macedo, 2017). Wildlife conservation is now taken as a business with benefits associated with the undertaking of conserving wildlife species, their habitats, ecosystems as well as biodiversity (Nyongesa, 2012). Wildlife conservation's success at any particular Protected Area depends on surrounding people's perceptions and attitudes towards conservation (Lindsey, Barnes, Nyirenda, Pumfrett, & Tambling, 2013). It has been noted globally that if local communities are not involved in wildlife conservation it is likely to fail (Baroth & Mathur, 2019).

Traditionally management of wildlife conservation areas prioritized that they keep communities out of such areas based on the belief that their activities were unable to coexist with ecosystem conservation (Holmes, 2013). Yet, the actual cost of conservation is borne more

precisely by the local communities who always get inadequate and inequitable benefits which accrue from wildlife conservation. In Africa, various challenges that are related to management and conservation of wildlife have been identified (Nyongesa, 2012). However, there are perceptions that there is lack of balance between costs borne by the local communities and the benefits. This has become the basis that led to the adoption of corporate social responsibility initiatives by wildlife authorities across the globe.

The ZPWMA as the custodian of wildlife in Zimbabwe has considered various CSR initiatives in areas around Hwange National Park which include drilling of boreholes, attending to human and wildlife conflict, provision of meat to the communities, community outreach programmes, establishment of junior ranger programmes in schools, creation of employment to the locals, free entry into the park to the locals, and training of community fire brigades among others. All these were attempts to change the mindsets of communities in promoting the sustainability of conservation of wildlife in Zimbabwe. Hence, little is known or documented on the extent of CSR initiatives in promoting wildlife conservation and management. Though there are various CSR initiatives by the ZPWMA in CAMPFIRE, wildlife conservation seems to be facing perennial challenges that range from illegal hunting, wildlife habitat fragmentation, and wildlife retaliatory killing.

A study by Vergara et al. (2019) focused on conservation efforts of forests in the context of industrialisation. The study focused more on conservation efforts with less emphasis on CSR though the study established that conservation creates employment. This study attempts to establish if there is a nexus between CSR

and sustainable wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe. Hancock (2018) developed a Vegetation Trend Analysis too as an aid to understand vegetation data. The focus of the study was devoid of CSR initiatives as variables for sustainable development, a focus of the current study. Topal and Ongen (2006) also carried out a study on governance of protected areas. The study did not focus on CSR whose link with sustainable wildlife conservation is central to this study.

In conducting this study, the researchers focused on identifying the sustainable wildlife conservation CSR initiatives offered to communities around Hwange National Park and whether there were any challenges in offering CSR to surrounding communities for sustainability of wildlife conservation. The ultimate objective was to come up with mechanisms that could be used to enhance CSR offered to communities towards sustainable wildlife conservation in Hwange National Park.

Literature Review

The Concept of Corporate Social Responsibility

It has been observed that each stakeholder defines the concept of CSR in the context of their expectations (De-Roeck, Akremi, & Swaen, 2016). However the objective of any business undertaking or any commercial enterprises globally cannot be divorced from society where it operates from (Yusoff & Yee, 2014). In this contemporary world, CSR is a concept in sustainable development and business where it offers new solutions for dealing with poverty especially in underdeveloped countries (Zainal, Zulkifli, & Saleh, 2013). According to De-Roeck et al. (2016), corporate social responsibility is a concept that goes beyond the single bottom line (i.e. profit), but rather it

incorporates the promotion of good cause within communities and good practices such as carrying out philanthropy. Thus, all this highlights a firm's ethical position as it builds more fruitful relationships with the organization's stakeholders.

The traditional view of shareholders towards a corporation indicate that every firm has only one objective regarding why it exist, which is to maximise shareholders' profit. This traditional view believes that a firm has a single primary responsibility to its shareholders which is to maximise their wealth and as such social related issues are not supposed to interfere with the business operations (Sushmita, 2013). Friedman (1970) passionately indicated that the only social responsibility of any organisation is to use its resources wisely and indulge in such activities that would only increase profits and shareholders' value.

However, the stakeholder view which is the modern view of the firm operations believes that a firm does not operate in a vacuum, hence the argument for the extension of the fiduciary duties of the directors, apart from company owners going towards protecting the interests of the society even at the expense of the corporate' profits. According to Freeman (1984), the concept CSR has however taken a pragmatic twist from the shareholder view of the firm to the stakeholder view (Sushmita, 2013). The gains that corporates obtain by getting stakeholder support through CSR would be costs which can be suffered by triggering stakeholder anger through social irresponsibility would merge to form a business case for CSR that compels corporates to be responsible socially but voluntarily (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

The CSR concept is based on the notion that it is the society that allows companies to operate through its backing as

they use resources within society hence societies would expect businesses to be socially responsible (Giannarakis, 2014). The concept also ensures that corporations bring on board environmental and social issues in their business operations as well as incorporate the voluntary interaction with stakeholders. It is important to note that it goes beyond profit-making, but to be considerate of society. This explanation is however consistent with that of Sushmita (2013) who considers CSR as the extent to which companies meet legal, ethical, economic and discretionary responsibilities as required by its stakeholders. Garriga and Melé (2004) argued that the concept of CSR is important since there is a misconception by societies that companies lack the moral dimension hence must contribute to the welfare of local populace in the society in the same way that other entities like government and charity organizations do.

On the other hand, some scholars have contrasting views which hold that there are still few empirical studies, especially in Southern Africa, which verify that CSR significantly adds to the development of the communities through reduction in poverty (Nyahunzvi, 2013; Van-Alstine & Afonis, 2013). However, the lack of consistency in the definition of CSR across studies makes it problematic to evaluate and compare the findings from diverse studies because they typically refer to unrelated dimensions of CSR (Pérez & Rodríguez-del-Bosque, 2015).

Theoretical review of Corporate Social Responsibility

Carroll's Pyramid

Carroll's Pyramid has been very instrumental to businesses operating within a community so that various societal

obligations can be viewed as expected by societies from business operations (Ferdous & Moniruzzaman, 2015). It can be noted however that the pyramid integrates the corporate citizenship and the stakeholder concept. The base of the pyramid reflects the economic theory which prioritizes the financial stakeholders meaning the business is aimed at making profit as the principal purpose of any business venture (Fernando, 2013). This is consistent with the Milton Friedman school of thought who postulates that the only purpose of a business enterprise is to maximize profit (Hamidu, Haron, & Amran, 2015). The theory places more emphasis on the issues of productivity and profitability than the well-being of the society.

The legal responsibility suggests that societies have not sanctioned corporates to operate towards fulfilling the profit motive only but also to operate within the laws set by a particular country (Bosch-Badia, Montllor-Serrats, & Terrazon, 2013). The legal perspective of the CSR theory emphasizes on the obligations that the society places on corporates through different legislative and statutory provisions.

Third in the pyramid is the ethical responsibility where society expects the businesses to act in a socially responsible way thus the avoidance of evil. However drawing from this perspective ethical responsibility would comprise those activities, practices or approaches that are expected or prohibited by the society even though they are not part of the legal instrument (Hamidu, Haron, & Amran,

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sibility which encompasses activities t society expects and that firms must practice good citizenship by promoting societal well-fare and goodwill (Carroll, 2016). In short, to be socially responsible, a firm must make great effort to generate profit, submit to the laws, be ethical and make a positive contribution to society.



FIGURE 1: THE PYRAMID OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (FERDOUS & MONIRUZZAMAN, 2015)

Social Contracts Theory

According to the Social Contract Theory, all business settings operate through an implied contract with the society as a whole (Rashid, 2015). The society in this case would allow the firm to do business under the pretext that such actions would ultimately benefit society. Generally the contract is strictly a hypothetical agreement aimed at observing the moral rules of which all businesses are expected to agree to this contact.

Corporates Social Responsibility practice in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, a few companies have embarked in CSR activities and have made substantial steps to fully embrace this concept (Mandima, Maravire, & Masere, 2014). Samantara and Dhawan (2020) demanded that companies in the 21st century should indulge and implement CSR activities so as to ensure corporate sustainability. Regardless of such calls from several researchers for companies to engage themselves in such

activities it seems the involvement of corporates continues to be relatively low (Masuku & Moyo, 2013). Where companies attempt to undertake the concept, they tend to target vulnerable individuals of the communities only.

The CSR activities in some areas include sponsoring of education to the underprivileged, the erection of leisure facilities in communities, providing assisting health institutions, establishment of retirement homes for the elderly among other activities. Such companies which have been exemplary include major mining corporations like Mbada Diamonds, Marange Diamonds, Zimplats, Murowa, Mimosa and Zimasco (Mandima, Maravire, & Masere, 2014). Bhasera (2013) also discovered that, although most of these mining corporates involve themselves in CSR initiatives, stakeholders' opinions are that these organizations are not doing enough for their local communities.

CSR initiatives offered to communities around National Parks for sustainable wildlife conservation

Rural communities who live with wildlife must derive benefits from their natural resources. According to Baroth and Mathur (2019), the accrual of such benefits would relate to the rights of access to the protected area and the resources. These benefits are what will assist in conserving wildlife, but these benefits must be real and tangible at each level (Baroth & Mathur, 2019). According to Tchakatumba et al. (2019) the benefits that may accrue from wildlife conservation include economic, social, ecological processes, education and research. It is important to note that the benefits which represent the economic value are not obvious or are they distributed among people in a method proportional to the costs to local people (Nyongesa, 2012). However, the costs of wildlife conserva-

tion are sometimes better acknowledged than the associated benefits. For wildlife conservation to be sustainable, there has to be a sense of community involvement and ownership. Watson et al. (2013) observe that benefits which accrue to those communities will reduce poaching. However, Lindsey et al. (2013) contend that poaching has also incentives and people may continue to hunt illegal, as long as it is more profitable. They further claim that these local communities will most likely participate in wildlife conservation if they understand the ecological environment and the ecosystem services provided by protected areas. This minimizes the future conflicts and improves cooperation between protected area managers and the local communities through education. It was observed in Tsholotsho and Hwange Districts that the communities benefit collectively in wards which produced hunted animals. Alexander and McGregor (2000) claimed that these levels of incentives are exactly what will enhance community perceptions towards conserving wildlife as well as putting value to it. Embarking in initiatives which stem from wildlife has made significant contributions to sustainable wildlife conservation in the two Districts (Alexander & McGregor, 2000). It was also observed that due to poor soils in some parts of the district and low rainfall there is huge expectancy for important economic benefits by the local communities from wildlife which they claim to be the custodians since this has been taken as a land use option by these communities. Positive benefits were also recorded as to outweigh negatives, which are gradually changing peoples' attitudes towards wildlife (Imvelo, 2019). Some of the studies conducted in Botswana revealed that, by setting communities to be in charge of local wildlife conservation, development programs and encouraging partnerships with other private sectors. The community-based natural resource

management approach will provide local communities with more authority to improve conservation as well as development outcomes (Lindsey, Barnes, Nyirenda, Pumfrett, & Tambling, 2013).

The review of literature provides evidence that numerous studies have been conducted on the management of wildlife, human wildlife conflict among others, but limited focus has been placed on whether the adoption of CSR has been a contributing factor to sustainable wildlife conservation. Remarkably, the general decline of population of wildlife is of a worry across the entire globe. In Zimbabwe, human activities together with rising population, demand for agricultural land and declining resources have put significant pressure on wildlife in Hwange National Park. In the review

tuted to fill the existing gap by assessing whether the adoption of CSR initiatives can be used as an aid to achieve sustainable wildlife conservation in protected areas. The conceptual framework below is deduced as shown in Figure 2 below.

Methodology

The pragmatism philosophy was adopted in this study considering that the researchers were more interested in using relevant research approaches in establishing how local communities were being engaged through CSR in the wildlife conservation and management in and around Hwange National Park. Pragmatism centres on linking theory and practice. A mixed-method research approach was used to gather required data. The survey research design was

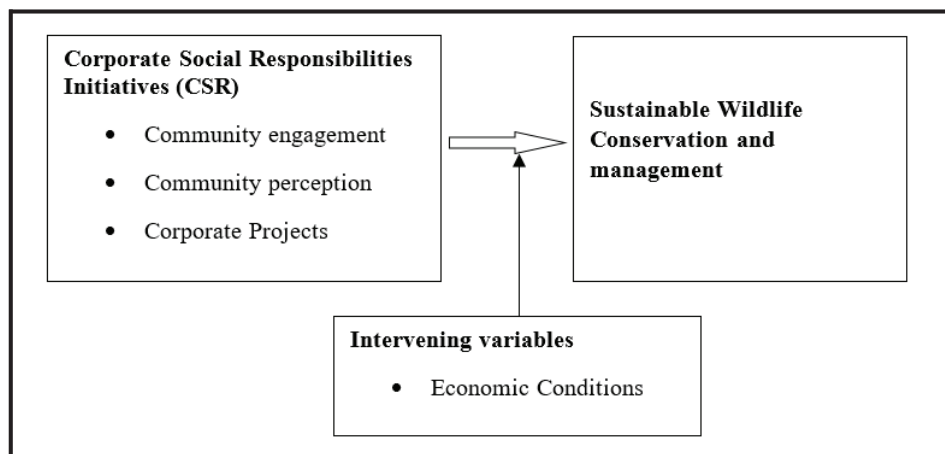


FIGURE 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

of literature it is however clear that various measures have been put in place so as to combat this growing phenomena. In this regard, the review undoubtedly reveals that there is a gap in as far as CSR initiatives can be used to attain sustainability in wildlife conservation in protected areas. It is however against this background that this study is insti-

chosen for this study because it enabled the researcher to meet the objectives by providing information that helped answer the research questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). The study took the form of a case study which allowed for a thorough understanding of the phenomenon that is through understanding the participants' mindset whilst in their

natural setting (Mills & Birks, 2014). The population for this study included communities around Hwange National Park, National Parks Management and commercial operators within Hwange National Park. The study mainly used a purposive sampling technique. The target population was 3534 households which are around Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe, being the Tsholotsho and the Hwange communities. Because it was both expensive and time consuming to study the whole target population, 190 respondents were purposively selected from Tsholotsho (Wards 1, 3 and 7) and Ward 15 from Hwange District using the Yount (2006) Rule which says 5% of the population is a fair sample. A questionnaire and an interview guide were used to collect primary data from the targeted sample of 190 households. To analyse quantitative data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. For qualitative data analysis, thematic analysis was used.

4% were above 60 years. The ages show that most of the respondents were in the age range of 31-40 years, while the least were in the age range over 60 years. The findings reflected that most of the members of Hwange community have the majority in the middle-ages.

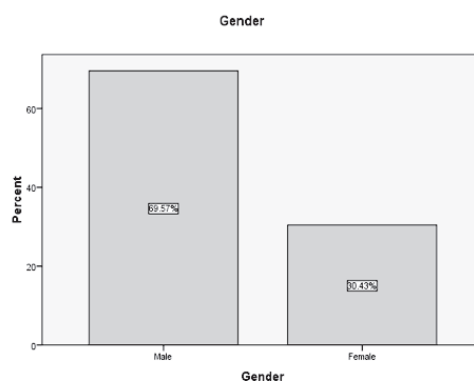


FIGURE 3: GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

TABLE 1: QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Research tools	Number distributed	Number returned	Returned as a %
Questionnaires	190	184	97%
Interviews	6	6	100%

Findings and Discussion

190 questionnaires were distributed on the respondents and 184 were returned to give a return rate of 97%. All the 15 scheduled interviews were conducted to give a response rate of 100% as reflected in Table 1.

From Figure 4 below, the ages of respondents were 35% for 31-40 years, 30% were in the age range of 41-50 years, 20% were below 30 years of age, 11% were in the age range of 51-60 years and

The gender of the respondents was 70% males and 30% females (Figure 1). The gender statistics reflected that they were more males than females in the Hwange National Park area where questionnaires were distributed.

The educational levels attained by the respondents as reflected in Figure 5 were as follows: secondary education was 35%, 30% had primary education, 20% had college certificates / diplomas, while 15% had a university degree. The findings pointed out that most of the respondents

were literate. However, the majority of the population in Hwange Community did not go beyond secondary education at 65%, while 35% attained tertiary education.

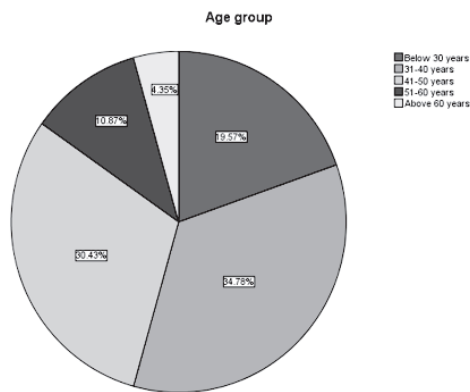


FIGURE 4: AGES OF RESPONDENTS

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Key informants were asked to comment on their perceptions on whether CSR helped in bringing sustainable development around the Hwange National Park. Their sentiments were as follows:

The community and the natural resources of any area should be married to each other to reduce conflict.

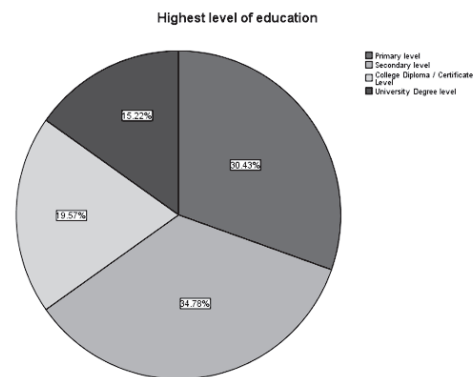


FIGURE 5: HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS ATTAINED BY RESPONDENTS

Key informant 1

The organization surely has a role to play as a CSR. This will help to develop the community.

Key informant 2

Respondents were asked whether the government encourages CSR practices. They were not sure whether the government encourages CSR practices. The key informants however noted that all what is done by the organization is to comply with Acts of the Parliament which enforce CSR. with Acts of the Parliament which enforce CSR.

Respondents were asked to rate whether CSR is good for the community or not. The majority (57%) agreed that CSR is good for the community while the least was not sure (13%). Key informants had the following statements to support CSR: As a stakeholder, I see CSR as the greatest intervention for the purposes of development.

Key informant 3

CSR is good for the community and this is also in support with the Indigenous Act which stipulates that the community should benefit from the resource around them.

Key informant 4

The findings indicated that 54% disagreed that the legal environment is conducive for CSR to take place. Key informants had different views as they felt that:

Regulations are in place and they are clear on CSR. One of the brainchild of CSR born from the legal framework was the CAMPFIRE Programme. It is the corporate responsibility to oversee the programme and to involve the community. However, the challenges come on implementation.

Key informant 3

The legal environment is good but implementation might be the challenge.

Key informant 4

The findings reflected that 69% of the respondents agreed that the economic situation is not permissive for the organization to engage in CSR. Key informants concurred with the findings from the current study as they were of the view that:

The economic situation is making the CSR difficult to engage in. It is making volunteers shun offering their services.

Key informant 6

It is a challenge of the day, the economic situation is hampering the CSR programmes, hence most people are no longer eager to be involved in the CSR

programmes.

Key informant 5

Findings from the survey revealed that there is political interference in CSR initiatives with the key informants in agreement with the same findings.

The community was indifferent on whether it benefited from CSR programmes as indicated by an equal 50% of the response rate of those who agreed and disagreed. However, key informants noted that the community benefits from the CSR initiatives through employment, income generation and other social benefits through interaction with wildlife.

The findings indicated that most of the respondents agreed that there was no community involvement in CSR programmes while the least were not sure whether there was community involvement or not. Tessema et al. (2010) concur with the findings as noted in their study that conservation areas which exclude local people or their participation have frequently caused adverse relations leading to increased poaching and habitat encroachment. Key informants noted the following that:

'The community is involved; however the economic situation is affecting the initiatives of CSR.

Key informant 1

These days community involvement has been reduced but when the need arises the community is always engaged.

Key informant 3

Findings reflected that there are some awareness programmes that are used to educate the community which are very

effective in wildlife sustainable conservation. Key informants supported the findings as follows:

Schools around Hwange National Park do dramas for awareness programmes which advocate how to interact with wildlife.

Key informant 1

There are some awareness programmes which assist in the dissemination of information on wildlife conservation and sustainable development.

Key informant 5

The research found that the community benefits from CSR through employment, food, fees and infrastructure. Holmes (2013) however has a different view as the researcher notes that local communities always get inadequate and inequitable benefits which accrue from wildlife conservation.

Research Hypotheses Testing

H0: CSR initiatives do not significantly enhance community perception towards conservation of wildlife.

Since $t_{crita,df,df} = t_{cri}0.025,183,179 = 1.984 < 24.654$ on Initiatives: There are some incentives that promote CSR, 26.536 on Initiatives: The organization advises the community of the daily running of the CSR, 22.515 on Initiatives: There are some awareness programmes that are used to educate the community, 22.244 on Initiatives: Community benefits through employment, food, fees payments and infrastructure and 22.689 on Initiatives: Community benefits through employment, food, fees payments and infrastructure, therefore reject H0 and conclude that corporate social responsibility initiatives significantly enhance community perception towards conservation.

TABLE 2: ONE-SAMPLE TEST

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
There are some incentives that promote CSR	24.654	183	.000	2.826	2.60	3.05
The organization advise the community of the daily running of the CSR	26.536	183	.000	2.630	2.43	2.83
There are some awareness programmes that are used to educate the community	22.515	183	.000	2.391	2.18	2.60
Community benefits through employment, food, fees payments and infrastructure	22.244	183	.000	2.130	1.94	2.32
Some community members are given roles to cub poaching by Resource monitors	22.689	183	.000	1.804	1.65	1.96

TABLE 3: REGRESSION ANOVA TABLE

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.448	4	2.362	2.089	.084 ^a
	Residual	202.378	179	1.131		
	Total	211.826	183			

a. Predictors: (Constant), CSR: Recreational activities, Corporate Social Responsibility: Education and awareness wildlife conservation issues, CSR: Provision of game meat, CSR: Attend to human wildlife conflict.

b. Dependent Variable: Strategies: Formation of anti-poaching group.

Since $F_{crit\alpha, dft, dfe} = F_{crit0.025,183,179} = 2.463 > F_{cal} = 2.089$, therefore reject H_0 and conclude that the regression model explains a significant amount of variation on the dependent variable.

TABLE 4: PATH COEFFICIENT

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.655	.421		11.048	.000
	Corporate Social Responsibility : Attend to human wildlife conflict	.166	.114	.119	1.458	.147
	Corporate Social Responsibility : Education and awareness wildlife conservation issues	-.004	.093	-.003	-.039	.969
	Corporate Social Responsibility : Provision of game meat	-.213	.091	-.181	-2.350	.020
	Corporate Social Responsibility : Recreational facilities	.001	.108	.000	.005	.996

a. Dependent Variable: Strategies : Formation of anti-poaching groups

Since $t_{crit\alpha, dft, dfe} = t_{crit0.025,183,179} = 1.984 > 1.458$ on corporate social responsibility: Attend to human wildlife conflict, -0.039 on Corporate Social Responsibility: Education and awareness wildlife conservation issues, -2.350 on Corporate Social Responsibility:

Provision of game meat and 0.005 on Corporate Social Responsibility: Recreational facilities, therefore fail to reject H_0 and conclude that there is no linear relationship between CSR and enhancement of sustainable wildlife conservation. The results signify that it may not only be CSR but other factors that enhance sustainable wildlife conservation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study shows that CSR is essential for wildlife conservation. While there is a legal framework in place in Zimbabwe the challenge is on the implementation of the rules and policies. It was noted that the community is not being involved in the conservation of wildlife. The findings also indicate that the economic situation is affecting the daily operation of Hwange National Park hence there is reduction of CSR which used to be done which includes the provision of social services. The study also concludes that some of the infrastructure like boreholes and roads are no longer being serviced on time due to limited resources.

The following are recommendations from the study: The community should be involved in the daily running of the conservation of wildlife around Hwange National Park. The study recommends that more effort should be put to ensure the implementation of legal instruments can help alleviate some of the challenges which are affecting the conservation of wildlife. The use of education and awareness campaigns are also essential for the conservation of the resources in the protected area. Another way of improving the conservation of the resources is to improve the incentives which are given to the community so that they feel ownership of the resources in their community. The study also established that if ZPWMA engages the community by forming anti-poaching committees to help in the conservation of wildlife around Hwange National Park.

However, the study has not been exhaustive, thus the following areas are recommended for further studies:

- Improving government intervention strategies on crafting policies that allow community involvement in the conser

vation of wildlife resources.

- Ensuring sustainability of incentives offered to the communities for future generations.

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