

# FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSERVATION ATTITUDES OF LOCAL PEOPLE IN WESTERN SERENGETI, TANZANIA.

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Attitudinal studies are increasingly being adopted as tools for evaluating public understanding, acceptance and the impact of conservation interventions. The findings of these studies have been useful in guiding the policy interventions. Many factors affect conservation attitudes positively or negatively. The factors inspiring positive attitudes are likely to enhance the conservation objectives while those inducing negatives attitudes may detrimentally undermine these objectives. The magnitude of the resultant effects of each particular factor is determined by the historical, political, ecological, socio-cultural and economic conditions and this may call for different management interventions. In this study we examined how conservation attitudes in western Serengeti are shaped by the following factors: level of conflicts with protected areas; wildlife imposed constraints (inadequate pasture, water, diseases, loss of livestock during migration, theft and depredation) participation in the community based project; and socio-demographic factors (age, education level, wealth, immigration, gender and household size) The results indicated that the level of conflicts, participation in the community based projects, inadequate pasture, lack of water, diseases, wealth and education were important in shaping peoples' attitudes. However, in a stepwise linear regression analysis, 59% of the variation in peoples' attitudes was explained by three variables i.e., conflict level with protected areas, lack of water and participation in the community project. In addition to these variables, level of education also contributed in explaining 51% of the variation in people' attitudes regarding the status of the game reserves. Five variables (lack of water, level of education inadequate pasture, participation in the community based project.