**The following sections of this research paper should be brief, clear and concise:**

1. **CONCLUSIONS**

**The cultural values, beliefs and norms of totemic practices in wildlife conservation in the Buganda kingdom, and how do these practices influence wildlife conservation**

The study concluded that totemic practices within the Buganda Kingdom play a critical role in fostering environmental stewardship and wildlife conservation. These cultural traditions, which include prohibitions against harming animals or plants associated with specific clans, help instill moral values that align with ecological preservation. The practices, deeply rooted in the community's ancestral beliefs, regulate behaviors and protect sacred species, thus contributing to the conservation of local biodiversity. The study also emphasizes the importance of educating young people about their totemic beliefs, which serves to embed respect for wildlife conservation in the cultural fabric of the community, ensuring a long-term commitment to environmental preservation. This integration of traditional values with contemporary environmental concerns presents a sustainable approach that aligns with the local community’s cultural identity.

Additionally, the study highlights the role of elders as vital sources of traditional ecological knowledge, bridging the gap between ancient wisdom and modern conservation methods. Their expertise in sustainable practices and the cultural significance of species can be transferred to younger generations through storytelling, poems, and other mediums. This intergenerational knowledge transfer ensures the preservation of both cultural practices and environmental ethics. The study found that the widespread acceptance of totemic beliefs and taboos, along with the strong personal connection to one's totem, fosters a deep sense of responsibility for wildlife protection. By combining ancestral wisdom with modern conservation strategies, the totemic practices of Buganda offer a culturally relevant and effective framework for sustaining both ecological and cultural biodiversity for future generations.

**The relationship between totem practices and wildlife conservation, emphasizing the potential mediating effects of certain interventions in this nexus.**

The study highlighted significant concerns within the Buganda community regarding the awareness, preservation, and support for totemic practices amidst modern development and environmental challenges. There is a clear recognition of the lack of awareness among younger generations about the cultural and environmental significance of totems, compounded by modern development projects that often overlook the cultural importance of these practices. Encroachment on traditional lands and habitats, along with insufficient governmental support and funding for conservation efforts, further threatens totemic species and undermines the preservation of cultural heritage. However, the study also emphasizes the strong belief that integrating plant and animal totems into conservation efforts can lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes. The community strongly supports the idea that conservation strategies that respect and incorporate traditional beliefs are more likely to succeed, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that merges cultural preservation with environmental conservation.

1. **Recommendations**

The Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities and the Buganda Kingdom Ministry of Heritage should collaborate with clan heads to promote totemic practices for wildlife conservation through radio and TV programs. Agencies like NEMA, NFA, and UWA should work alongside cultural institutions rather than operating independently in wildlife conservation efforts. NCDC should integrate indigenous conservation knowledge including totems, beliefs, values, and taboos into the national education curriculum at primary and secondary levels. Environmental activities such as tree cutting, wetland reclamation, and bush burning should require local council and Gombolola chief approval to prevent environmental degradation. The government should support artists in composing songs and plays on wildlife conservation, utilizing schools and musicians to spread awareness through entertainment. Tree planting should be incorporated into Buganda Kingdom events, such as Kabaka’s birthday, coronation, weddings, and funerals, to promote environmental conservation. Traditional burial practices using bark cloth (*olubugo*) should be encouraged, along with planting trees and natural flowers instead of using artificial wreaths. Cultural gatherings like *Kisakatte*, led by the Nabagereka, should continue educating youth on norms, values, taboos, totems, and environmental conservation. Clan heads should hold meetings at clan seats to educate younger generations about totems and the importance of protecting them and their habitats. UWA and MITWA should permit Buganda clans to keep some totemic wildlife species on clan land under strict inspection and guidance, similar to zoo enclosures, for educational and conservation purposes. The Uganda Tourism Board should use animal sculptures representing regional wildlife species to market and promote tourism, following Buganda Kingdom’s model along KabakaAnjagala Road.

**Areas of further research:**

Impact of Cultural Beliefs on Biodiversity Conservation: Further research should investigate the broader impacts of cultural beliefs and practices on biodiversity conservation. This includes examining how totemic species influence local attitudes toward conservation and the role of cultural norms in promoting sustainable resource use. Understanding these dynamics can lead to more effective conservation strategies that leverage cultural values to protect endangered species and ecosystems.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Community-Based Conservation: More research is needed to assess the effectiveness of community-based conservation initiatives that focus on the preservation of totemic species. Studies should explore the outcomes of these initiatives in terms of biodiversity conservation, community engagement, and socio-economic benefits. This research would help refine models for integrating cultural preservation with environmental sustainability.

Quantitative Analysis of Health Benefits Linked to Ecosystem Conservation: Future studies could explore the direct and indirect health benefits of preserving totemic species and their associated ecosystems. For instance, research could investigate how the conservation of totemic species contributes to food security, clean water, and reduced disease transmission. This would provide empirical evidence of the health-related benefits of cultural and ecological preservation, further justifying the integration of cultural perspectives in health policy.

Exploring the Role of Gender in the Conservation of Totemic Species: Research could further explore how gender dynamics influence the conservation of totemic species. In many cultures, men and women may have different roles in environmental management, and understanding these roles could help improve conservation strategies. This research could also examine how empowering women in conservation efforts related to totemic species might contribute to achieving gender equality (MDG 3) and other MDGs as well as SDG’s.

Climate Change and the Future of Totemic Species: Another area for future research is to investigate the impact of climate change on totemic species and how communities can adapt their cultural practices to address these changes. With climate change threatening ecosystems worldwide, understanding how shifts in climate may affect the availability of totemic species or the symbolic roles they play in cultures will be crucial in developing adaptive conservation strategies. Research in this area can help ensure that cultural and ecological conservation efforts are resilient in the face of global environmental changes.