

## **What makes conservationists persevere? Resilience strategies at work**

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL 1 Interview guide (only the part that is applicable to this study; more questions were asked during the interview as part of larger study).

1. When did you start working in conservation?
  - 1.1. When
  - 1.2. Organisation/programme?
  - 1.3. Main role
  - 1.4. Where/country or countries of work
  - 1.5. Duration/for how long?
2. Why did you enter the field of conservation?
  - 2.1. What were your reasons to start working in the conservation sector?
  - 2.2. Would you be able to give your main reasons for working in conservation now? Why do you do what you do? Why is that important to you?
3. According to your experience as a conservation professional, which factors influence work performance in conservation in general?
  - 3.1. What could be promoters of work performance?
  - 3.2. What could be barriers to good work performance?
4. What is your individual approach to stay motivated in the complex field of conservation?
  - 4.1. How do you maintain your motivation when working in the field of conservation?
  - 4.2. Can you use any (real-life) examples?
  - 4.3. What would you give as a recommendation to stay motivated when working conservation professional, especially in countries with high biodiversity and limited informational, human and financial resources?

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLE 1 Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ) checklist (Tong et al. 2007).

**First author (TACL) positionality statement**

In the spirit of self-reflexivity, I acknowledge my standpoint as an educated White woman (PhD). At the time of data collection and analysis I was a PhD candidate and had undertaken several relevant training workshops (e.g. on conducting interviews and *Nvivo*) provided by my university. I acknowledge that my positionality influenced this study to some extent; my experiences working as a conservation practitioner in countries with high biodiversity and limited human, informational and financial resources triggered my interest in this research topic and my experiences proved to be useful in helping me extract meaning from the transcribed interviews. No repeat interviews were deemed necessary to answer the research question. Field notes were not necessary because interviews were recorded and transcribed. Because of time restrictions, transcripts and findings were not returned to participants for comment and/or correction.

| Topic  | Item no. | Guide questions/description                                 | Reported in section               |
|--|----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity</b> |          |   |                                   |
| <i>Personal characteristics</i>                |          |   |                                   |
| Interviewer/facilitator                        | 1        | Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?      | Participants and interview guide  |
| Credentials                                    | 2        | What were the researcher’s credentials? (e.g. PhD, MD)      | See above positionality statement |
| Occupation                                     | 3        | What was their occupation at the time of the study?         | See above positionality statement |
| Gender   | 4        | Was the researcher male or female?                          | See above positionality statement |
| Experience and training                        | 5        | What experience or training did the researcher have?        | See above positionality statement |
| <i>Relationship with participants</i>          |          |   |                                   |
| Relationship established                       | 6        | Was a relationship established prior to study commencement? | Participants and interview guide  |

|  |   |   |                                   |
|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Participant knowledge of the interviewer | 7 | What did the participants know about the researcher? (e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research)                                  | Participants and interview guide  |
| Interviewer characteristics              | 8 | What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? (e.g. bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic) | See above positionality statement |

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## Domain 2: Study design

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### *Theoretical framework*

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|                                       |   |  |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Methodological orientation and Theory | 9 | What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? (e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis) | Participants and interview guide |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|

### *Participant selection*

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|                    |    |  |                                     |
|--------------------|----|--|-------------------------------------|
| Sampling           | 10 | How were participants selected? (e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball) | Participants and interview guide    |
| Method of approach | 11 | How were participants approached? e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email          | Participants and interview guide    |
| Sample size        | 12 | How many participants were in the study?   | Characteristics of the participants |
| Non-participation  | 13 | How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?                      | N/A                                 |

### *Setting*

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|                              |    |   |  |
|------------------------------|----|---|--|
| Setting of data collection   | 14 | Where was the data collected? e.g. home, clinic, workplace                          | Participants and interview guide             |
| Presence of non-participants | 15 | Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?                   | Participants and interview guide             |
| Description of sample        | 16 | What are the important characteristics of the sample? (e.g. demographic data, date) | Characteristics of the participants, Table 1 |

### *Data collection*

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|                        |    |   |  |
|------------------------|----|---|--|
| Interview guide        | 17 | Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested? | Participants and interview guide             |
| Repeat interviews      | 18 | Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?                         | See above positionality statement            |
| Audio/visual recording | 19 | Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?           | Participants and interview guide             |
| Field notes            | 20 | Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?       | See above positionality statement            |
| Duration               | 21 | What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?                       | Participants and interview guide             |
| Data saturation        | 22 | Was data saturation discussed?  | Participants and interview guide, Discussion |
| Transcripts returned   | 23 | Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?      | See above positionality statement            |

### **Domain 3: Analysis and findings**

#### *Data analysis*

|                                |    |   |                                   |
|--------------------------------|----|---|-----------------------------------|
| Number of data coders          | 24 | How many data coders coded the data?                        | Participants and interview guide  |
| Description of the coding tree | 25 | Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?       | N/A                               |
| Derivation of themes           | 26 | Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data? | Analysis                          |
| Software                       | 27 | What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?  | Analysis                          |
| Participant checking           | 28 | Did participants provide feedback on the findings?          | See above positionality statement |

#### *Reporting*

|                      |    |   |  |
|----------------------|----|---|--|
| Quotations presented | 29 | Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes/findings? Was each quotation identified? e.g. participant number | Results, Supplementary tables 2–3, Table 2 |
|----------------------|----|---|--|

|                              |    |  |                   |
|------------------------------|----|--|-------------------|
| Data and findings consistent | 30 | Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?     | Results           |
| Clarity of major themes      | 31 | Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?                   | Results           |
| Clarity of minor themes      | 32 | Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes? | Results, Figs 2–4 |

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLE 2 Quotes from interviews with conservation professionals (n = 22) conducted during March–June 2017, illustrating factors associated with positive psychological states in the workplace.

| <b>Major theme</b>           | <b>Illustrative quote</b>   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Recognition and appreciation | ‘It’s those little things that really change the way you motivate yourself. [...] Being recognised for bigger things [...] and people seeing your value actually.’ (Respondent 6)               |
| Achievement and work success | ‘What is really motivating me, personally, if I see some success.’ (Respondent 14)  |
| Work itself                  | ‘Also the most important thing, I feel love and passion for nature; it gives you motivation. [...] That’s why if something happened at least you have your belief in the cause.’ (Respondent 3) |

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLE 3 Quotes from interviews with conservation professionals (n = 22) conducted during March–June 2017, illustrating factors associated with negative psychological states in the workplace.

| Major and subtheme(s)                                  | Illustrative quote from interviews   |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Organizational policy and administration</b>     |  |
| Division of monetary and non-monetary resources        | ‘I was supposed to have been given enough money to have rented a room somewhere [...] I was in the little backroom in a house, which was airless, next to a smoky generator full of rats.’ (Respondent 7)  |
| Performance appraisal procedures and feedback          | ‘The supervisor will give feedback on your performance [...]. This can be biased [...]. If he doesn’t like you, even if you work well, you don’t get a satisfactory [assessment].’ (Respondent 13)   |
| Formal and informal exclusion (e.g. job opportunities) | ‘You’re working with rural people, but members of those rural communities don’t have the paper qualifications to get a job with your NGO. So even if there might be other things that are actually much more important, [...] a good understanding of the social context.’ (Respondent 11)   |
| <b>2. Working conditions</b>                           |  |
| Cognitive demands                                      | ‘The companies they really want to see results, like each 3 months [...] [do you] know you are going to save the golden-lion tamarin? [...] A lot of pressure for results.’ (Respondent 19)  |
| Emotional demands                                      | ‘Personally, you get affected because you are put into a situation where, if you want to start a family, it’s kind of hard because your job specification does not allow you to have your wife and kids where you are working.’ (Respondent 13)  |
| Physical demands                                       | ‘[The] site was inappropriate, there was way too much contact with the [wildlife]; they were completely over-habituated. [...] We had no choice in the matter. [...] Myself and somebody else got badly bitten. [...] I was a bit traumatised by the whole thing. After that I just thought I don’t want to be here anymore.’ (Respondent 7) |
| <b>3. Work–life balance</b>                            |  |
|  | ‘I need time to get a break because for the last 4 years I worked really hard. At [employer] it’s like constantly working, all the time [...] there is no balance.’ (Respondent 8)   |
| <b>4. Relationship with supervisor</b>                 |  |
|  | ‘They [bosses] are very controlling. And that can limit your development and the contribution that you can make to the project. That is one of the reasons why I resigned [...]. I loved what I was doing, but I couldn’t see how I was ever going to make more of a contribution.’ (Respondent 15)  |