

Why does one volunteer in a conservation agency?

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to determine the profile and motives of SANParks Honorary Rangers. The key question behind this research is: why do people spend time and their own money to work in national parks? The total database of 1300 Honorary Rangers was used of which 16% completed the questionnaire.

The results indicate that these volunteers differ from other types of volunteers in that most of them volunteer solely as Honorary Rangers and that they started at a mature age. Their primary motive for being a SANParks Honorary Ranger is to advance conservation, the second most important motive is that it forms part of their lifestyle, and lastly, for social and group affiliation purposes.

Key phrases:

conservation, motives, national parks, SANParks, South Africa, volunteering, volunteer, volunteer tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteering has grown significantly over the past few decades because it is viewed as a means to alleviate the needs of others (Otoo & Amuquandoh 2014:51). In fact, this activity has evolved to a stage where it has even become a popular tourism activity which has led to the establishment of the concept of volunteer tourism. Volunteer tourism occurs in various forms such as travelling for study tours (Heron 2005:782; Repeckiene, Kvedaraite, Zvireliene & Glinskiene 2014:96), internships (Billig & Root 2006:45; Boakye 2012:327; Bringle &

Hatcher 2011), student exchange programmes (Lyons & Wearing 2008:361), international gap year (Lyons, Hanley, Wearing & Neil 2012:361), career breaks (Gilmour & Saunders 1995:627), and charity work (Otoo & Amuquandoh 2014:51; Yates & Youniss 1998:495).

From an economic point of view, volunteering is significant; for example, in the USA, it was calculated to be worth \$169 billion in 2009 (Dwyer, Bono, Snyder, Nov & Berson 2013:182). Further to this Borgonovi (2008:2321) found that 44% of the adult population in America engages in formal volunteer activities and they therefore donate 3.5 hours on average each week. McGehee (2014:847) reports that an organisation such as Earthwatch alone has included 90000 volunteers in 1400 projects across 120 countries that contributed US\$67 million and 11 million hours to scientific fieldwork. Unfortunately, very few studies have determined the economic impact of this activity which includes South Africa, but it is clear that this activity is becoming more popular and is growing globally (Goodwin 2015:43; Taplin, Dredge & Scherrer 2014:875).

Volunteering is generally defined as “any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or organization” (Wilson 2000:15). However, Culverhouse (2014: Internet) defines it as contributing one’s time and energy to help improve the community or the environment, or to help others in need. The Random House Kernerman Webster’s College Dictionary (2010: Internet) summarises it as an act of free will to help or perform a service without official payment. Volunteering can also be defined as on-going planned and discretionary pro-social behaviour that benefits non-intimate others and offers little or no tangible rewards (Penner 2002:447). According to Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth (1996:364), there are four elements to volunteering: free choice (free will), remuneration (none at all, non-expected, expenses reimbursed), structure (formal and informal) and intended beneficiaries (who benefits?).

This raises the question: why do people volunteer? Why would someone work without being compensated, particularly since it does not really make sense from an economic point of view? In many cases, people actually pay money to do so since volunteering has costs attached to it, even if the costs are hidden or linked to opportunity (Cappellari & Turati 2004:66). Whilst many studies on volunteering focus on

- student volunteers (Cornelis, Van Hiel & De Cremer 2013:456; Repeckiene *et al.* 2014),

- or volunteers at events (Güntert, Neufeind & Wehner 2015:656; Skirstad & Hanstad 2013:316),
- or sustaining volunteer work (Hidalgo & Moreno 2009:594),
- or the time spent volunteering (Finkelstein, Penner & Brannick 2005:403),
- or volunteers at museums (Deery, Jago & Mair 2011:313),
- or the volunteering experience (Davis, Hall & Meyer 2003:248),

Very few address the motives of volunteers in conservation organisations, especially in developing countries. It is this gap that led to this research being conducted where the aim is to determine firstly, who volunteers, and secondly, why they volunteer (motives) in SANParks (South African National Parks) as Honorary Rangers.

SANParks Honorary Rangers is an organisation of volunteers that operates in the 21 national parks in South Africa, a country that is known for its wildlife and conservation programmes.

National parks have a long history of being associated with volunteering since the first park in South Africa, namely Kruger National Park, was established. Kruger National Park was also the first park where volunteer work was recorded and volunteers have been active there since 1902 (SANParks Honorary Rangers 2016: Internet). SANParks Honorary Rangers was formally established on 5 May 1964 and has a membership of approximately 1 300 rangers. These volunteers perform various tasks in all the national parks without any remuneration. The tasks range from assisting at entry gates to building infrastructure, fundraising, eradication of invasive species, conservation services, education and awareness programmes, hosting of events such as birding, and to counter poaching activities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The importance of volunteering

Borgonovi (2008:2321), Cemalcilar (2009:432), Carlo, Okun, Knight and De Guzman (2005:1294) and Dwyer *et al* (2013:182) are just a few of the scholars who highlighted the growth experienced in the field of volunteering not only in practice but also as a field of research. Dwyer *et al* (2013:182) go as far as to say that volunteerism helps to create a

better world. The literature review furthermore revealed that people who volunteer enjoy good physical and mental health. These volunteers are also more likely to be happy and suffer less from depression (Borgonovi 2008:2321). Therefore it contributes to the wellness of the individual. These studies confirm the importance of this activity from different perspectives.

It furthermore shows that volunteering is not a simplistic process. Uysal and Hagen (1993:798) and Kruger and Saayman (2010:93) state that reasons for participating may vary from one person to the next, from one market segment to another and from one event or activity to another. Finkelstein (2009:653) adds that one's motivation can change over time and that people volunteer to satisfy one or more needs or motives.

When one scans the internet looking at conservation programmes where volunteers are invited to become part of, it is clear that many options are available (Frontiergap 2016: Internet; Forgood 2016: Internet). Most of these programmes are directed to address saving penguins, sharks, whales, dolphins, rhino's, tigers and bears to name a few. These programmes, however, are not always sustainable since they are very dependent on sponsorships and the involvement of volunteers.

In many instances these volunteers pay an amount to do the work (Shamwari 2016: Internet). Hence volunteers are a source of income. The role that volunteers play in these organisations is also confined to specific activities that could run from a few days to a few weeks. From a national parks perspective Honorary Rangers play a very important role especially when one looks at the role they fulfil for example fundraising and sponsorships. They therefore alleviate some of the pressure on SANParks budgets not only from a financial point of view but also from a human capital point of view (SANParks 2006: Internet).

In this regard, Crompton and McKay (1997:426) state that understanding people's motives should be the primary goal of managers and marketers, since identifying and prioritising motives is a key ingredient in understanding one's decision-making process. This becomes very relevant when one has to develop programmes, products or services, since it can help in satisfying needs and contribute to satisfaction (Kruger & Saayman 2010:93). Generally, one will find that people have primary as well as secondary motives that should be considered in the planning of programmes, products and services. Finkelstein (2009:654) indicated that volunteers could also be motivated intrinsically or extrinsically.

2.2 Motives for volunteering

Motives are “key in decision making since it exerts a push in the individual towards certain types of activities” (Moutinho 1987:16). In the literature, there are different reasons or motives for people to volunteer. These reasons include personal interests, for example, spending free time in an interesting way (Čepas 2012:27), or altruistic motives that increases the welfare of people in communities where these volunteers work, as found in a study conducted amongst young people (Jonutytė 2007:236).

Developing skills or gaining new experiences were found to be key motives in studies conducted by Katz and Rosenberg (2005:429) and Prouteau and Wolff (2006:992). Cappellari and Turati (2004:619) identified social motives that initiated the expansion of individual social networks. Rehberg (2005:109) found three key motives, namely to help other people, a need for self-development and a need for novel experiences.

Repeckiene *et al.* (2014:109) found two motives, namely those that were self-centred, which included meaningful ways to spend leisure time and to change oneself; and other centred motives which included to help others to socialise, and gain new experiences. In a similar trend, Cornelis *et al.* (2013:456) also confirmed a two motive approach, namely self-focused and other focused where one could divide most motives into these two areas.

A study conducted by Otoo and Amuquandoh (2014:51) revealed three motives in one of the few studies carried out on volunteer tourism in Africa, specifically Ghana. These motives were altruistic and learning, philanthropy, and socialisation. Brown and Letho (2005:479) identified five motives: cultural immersion, giving back, seeking camaraderie with fellow volunteers, family bonding, and education. Gilmour and Saunders (1995:627) also identified motives such as people want to take a break from their routines, to see other countries, to do something different and to widen their horizons. Batson, Ahmad and Tsang (2002:429) uncovered four motives for community volunteering, namely egoism (to increase one’s own welfare), altruism (increase the welfare of others), collectivism (increase the welfare of others), and principlism (to uphold universal and impartial principles).

Volunteers may therefore be motivated by both internal and external influences (Dwyer *et al.* 2013:181) and for this reason Clary and Snyder (1991:119) proposed a functional approach which is concerned with the motivational basis underlying personal needs and desires of the volunteer in pursuit of certain goals. This seems to be the best framework to apply when one

determines the reasons why people volunteer (Deery *et al.* 2011:313; Dwyer *et al.* 2013:313).

Based on this approach, Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen and Miene (1998:1516) differentiated between six motivational factors that volunteers might serve: *firstly*, values that include those that are personally important; *secondly*, understanding, which implies learning about the world and applying skills; *thirdly*, social motives, which include being concerned with social rewards; *fourthly*, enhancement, which implies growing psychologically; *fifthly*, career motives, which imply gaining experience that could benefit one's career; and *lastly*, protective motives, which address personal problems or reduce negative feelings.

Güntert *et al.* (2015:686), in their research in the field of event volunteering, proposed two more functions, namely good citizenship and excitement. The complexity of volunteer motivation is determined by several aspects such as age, gender, cultural context, fields of interest and area of volunteering (Deery *et al.* 2011:313; Repeckiene *et al.* 2014:96).

The benefits of volunteering, according to Broad (2003:63), are personal development, education and learning, skills and work experience, spending time doing something for oneself, and increased employability. Personal development is popular in volunteer research and is referred to as establishing identity and exploring oneself. Jones (2005:87) found that young people benefit in developing skills such as interpersonal, leadership, communication, and problem solving, which improves their employability and education performance.

Repeckiene *et al.* (2014:96) identified two benefits, namely personal (gaining skills, learning informally, building professional contacts) and social, which includes aspects such as personal satisfaction, feeling valued and showing solidarity, etcetera. Whilst many studies have been conducted in the field of volunteering, few have ventured into the realm of Honorary Rangers, especially in developing countries. Table 1 is a summary of studies conducted on this theme.

TABLE 1: Summary of motives for volunteering

Authors	Motives/reasons for volunteering
Clary and Snyder (1991:119)	Motivational basis underlying personal needs and desires of the

Authors	Motives/reasons for volunteering
	volunteer in pursuit of certain goals.
Gilmour & Saunders (1995:627)	To take a break from their routines, to see other countries, to do something different and to widen their horizons.
Clary <i>et al.</i> (1998:1516)	Values that include those that are personally important; secondly, understanding, which implies learning about the world and applying skills; thirdly, social motives, which include being concerned with social rewards; fourthly, enhancement, which implies growing psychologically; fifthly, career motives, which imply gaining experience that could benefit one's career; and lastly, protective motives, which address personal problems or reduce negative feelings.
Batson <i>et al.</i> (2002:429)	Motives for community volunteering, namely egoism (to increase one's own welfare), altruism (increase the welfare of others), collectivism (increase the welfare of others), and principism (to uphold universal and impartial principles).
Cappellari & Turati (2004:619)	Social motives like socialisation and group affiliation since it addressed aspects of social responsibility and being with people who are like-minded.
Rehberg (2005:109)	To help other people, self-development and to have novel experiences.
Brown & Letho (2005:479)	Cultural immersion, giving back, seeking camaraderie with fellow volunteers, family bonding, and education.
Katz & Rosenberg (2005:429) and Prouteau & Wolff (2006:992).	Developing skills or gaining new experiences.
Jonutyte (2007:236)	Altruistic motives that increase the welfare of people in communities where these volunteers work.
Deery <i>et al.</i> (2011:313) and Dwyer <i>et al.</i> (2013:313)	Motives based on both internal and external influences.
Čepas (2012:27)	To spend free time in interesting ways.
Cornelis <i>et al.</i> (2013:456)	Self-focused and other focused motives.
Otoo & Amuquandoh (2014:51)	Altruistic and learning, philanthropy and socialisation.
Repeckiene <i>et al.</i> (2014:109)	Self-centred motives (meaningful ways to spend leisure time and to change oneself) and other centred motives (to help others to

Authors	Motives/reasons for volunteering
	socialise, and gain new experiences).
Güntert <i>et al.</i> (2015:686)	Good citizenship and excitement.

Source: Compiled by author

3. METHOD OF RESEARCH

3.1 Questionnaire and sampling

This exploratory study made use of a quantitative survey where the questionnaire was developed based on the works of Broad (2003:63), Deery *et al.* (2011:313) and Gilmour and Saunders (1995:627).

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A contained socio-demographic information such as age, gender, income and education. Section B covered aspects of volunteer behaviour and captured information such as how long the person had been volunteering, other organisations in which he/she had volunteered, and so forth. Section C focused on the motives of volunteering. 21 statements were used and respondents rated these statements on a five-point Likert scale where 1 was *not at all important* to 5 being *extremely important*.

The questionnaire was sent to the executive committee of the SANParks Honorary Rangers for comments and clarity where after it was distributed to all 1300 members who live in various parts of South Africa via email. Hence the total population which included all the honorary rangers whose details were captured on the SANParks Honorary Rangers database was used in this research. The survey was conducted during the month of August 2015 and 213 useful questionnaires were obtained. This constitutes a 16% return rate which according to Israel (1992:3) is more than sufficient for precision of $\pm 7\%$.

3.2 Statistical analyses

The data were captured using Microsoft Excel© and analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 23 (2016) and Statistica version 12 (StatSoft 2016). The analysis was performed in

two stages: compiling a profile of the respondents and conducting factor analysis on the motives for participating as Honorary Rangers. The profile was compiled using descriptive statistics.

For the factor analysis, principal component factor analysis using an Oblimin Rotation with Kaiser Normalization was performed on the 21 motive statements to explain the variance-covariance structure of a set of variables through a few linear combinations of these variables. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the covariance matrix was suitable ($KMO > 0.8$) for factor analysis. Kaiser's criteria for the extraction of factors were used and 5 factors with eigenvalues larger than one were extracted.

These factors explain 56% of variation in the data. All items with a factor loading greater than 0.4 were considered to contribute to a factor and all items with loadings less than 0.4 were regarded as not correlating significantly with this factor (Steyn 2000:1). Any item that cross-loaded on two factors with a factor loading greater than 0.4, was categorised in the factor where interpretability was best. A reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was computed for each factor to estimate its internal consistency. All factors with a reliability coefficient above 0.6 were considered acceptable in this study. One factor (5) had a loading of 0.55 and the reason being that it had only two statements that loaded onto this factor. The average inter-item correlations were also computed as another measure of reliability: these, according to Clark and Watson (1995:303), should lie between 0.15 and 0.55.

4. RESULTS

The results section offers a summary of the profile of Honorary Rangers who completed the questionnaire, where after the motives are discussed.

4.1 Who are the Honorary Rangers?

Table 2 contains a summary of the descriptive results of the profile of SANParks Honorary Rangers as well as the activities they participate in.

On the question of who the Honorary Rangers are, it is clear that the sample comprises more males than females and these rangers are on average 56 years of age and most of them are married, while the majority are from Gauteng province in South Africa. It is

noteworthy that they were first exposed to volunteering in this organisation at a rather late age of 50 years. In addition, more than 50% of these volunteers volunteer only as an Honorary Ranger, which they have been doing for an average of 6 years.

TABLE 2: Table of Honorary Rangers

CATEGORY	PROFILE
Gender	Male (66%), Female (34%)
Average age	56 years
Home language	English(49%), Afrikaans (46%)
Marital status	Married (72%)
Province of residence	Gauteng (43%), Eastern Cape (17%), Mpumalanga (13%)
Level of education	Diploma/degree/post-graduate degree/ professional qualification or equivalent (86%)
Age of first exposure to volunteering for SANParks Honorary Rangers	Average age of 50 years
Employment	Full-time employed (51%), Self-employed (24%), retired (19%), part-time employed (4%), unemployed (4%), student (1%)
Average volunteer experience	6 years
Days spent per year in National Parks	55 days annually
Volunteering status	55% only volunteer at SANParks Honorary Rangers
Average expenditure per year on volunteering activities	R7 537.95 (return transport) and R2 951.25 (food & beverage)
Type of volunteering activities mostly to always participated in	Fundraising (22%), public information and awareness (22%), camp/gate/road duty in national parks (21%), park maintenance (18%) and general administration (18%).

Source: Compiled by author (Statistica version 12)

These volunteers spend 55 days a year per person in national parks in South Africa. They spend approximately R10 000 per year in order to volunteer where 75% of this is spent on transport to and in the parks while the remainder is spent on food and beverages. The latter therefore supports the notion that volunteering has financial implications for Honorary

Rangers more than just opportunity costs. It also implies that this type of volunteering can be categorised as volunteer tourism. An interesting finding is the variety of activities in which they are involved in covering aspects such as fundraising, awareness, and park maintenance, to mention a few.

4.2 What motivates Honorary Rangers?

Using an Oblimin Rotation with Kaiser Normalization, the pattern matrix of the principal component factor analyses identified five motivational factors (Table 3). These were labelled according to similar characteristics and accounted for 56% of the total variance.

TABLE 3: Factor analysis: pattern matrix

Motives	Factor				
	Factor 1: Conser- vation	Factor 2: Career develop- ment	Factor 3: Socialisa- tion &group affiliation	Factor 4: Lifestyle	Factor 5: Fun and escape
Genuine interest in the area of conservation	0.807				
To help improve the environment	0.788				
Desire to continue involvement in conservation	0.733				
Because of a passion for conservation	0.655				
To make a difference	0.581				
I can make contacts that will help further my business career		0.879			
Because my friends also volunteer		0.823			

Motives	Factor				
	Factor 1: Conser- vation	Factor 2: Career develop- ment	Factor 3: Socialisa- tion &group affiliation	Factor 4: Lifestyle	Factor 5: Fun and escape
Volunteering makes me feel important		0.630			
To be part of a prestigious group of people		0.621			
Because my family enjoys national parks		0.580			
Volunteering makes me feel needed		0.511			
To make friends and to be with like-minded people			0.780		
It forms part of my social responsibilities			0.618		
For personal growth			0.604		
To further my knowledge on conservation-related matters			0.549		
I enjoy working with people			0.501		
It forms part of my lifestyle				0.797	
I enjoy spending time in nature				0.701	
Volunteering helps me to gain a new perspective on life				0.551	
To have fun					0.707
Gives me an opportunity to escape from my everyday					0.517

Motives	Factor				
	Factor 1: Conser- vation	Factor 2: Career develop- ment	Factor 3: Socialisa- tion &group affiliation	Factor 4: Lifestyle	Factor 5: Fun and escape
routine					
Mean values	4.62	2.62	3.94	4.03	3.65
Inter-item correlation	0.47	0.40	0.31	0.36	0.39
Reliability coefficient	0.82	0.80	0.68	0.61	0.55

Source: Compiled by author using Oblimin Rotations with Kaiser Normalization

▪ **Factor 1: Conservation**

Factor 1 was labelled conservation since it captured statements focusing on conservation and the environment related statements such as genuine interest in conservation and to help improve the environment. This factor has the highest mean value of 4.62 which can be regarded as the primary reason for being an Honorary Ranger.

This motive can be classified as an altruistic motive as indicated by Batson *et al.* (2003:429), Čepas (2012:27) and Otoo and Amuquandoh (2014:52), which might also explain why Honorary Rangers are willing to spend so much money and time to volunteer. However the label of conservation has not been found in the literature review.

▪ **Factor 2: Career development**

The second factor had the lowest mean value of 2.62 and is concerned with enhancing and advancing one's career; it included statements such as I can further my business career and it makes me feel important. Career development has been found by several researchers such as Clary and Snyder (1991:119), Clary *et al.* (1998:1516) and Broad (2003:63). However, in this case this does not appear to be that important and can be considered a secondary motive. Deery *et al.* (2011:320) as well as Okun *et al.* (1998:231) confirm that

older volunteers appear to be less motivated by advancing their careers than their younger counterparts.

- **Factor 3: Socialisation and group affiliation**

Factor 3 was labelled socialisation and group affiliation since it addressed aspects of social responsibility and being with people who are like-minded. This factor had the third highest mean value of 3.94. Cappellari and Turati (2004:619), Clary *et al.* (1998:1516), Edwards (2005:21), Otoo and Amuquandoh (2014:51) and Repeckiene *et al.* (2014:96) found this aspect to be very important in the research that they conducted.

- **Factor 4: Lifestyle**

Factor 4 had the second highest mean value of 4.03 and confirms that for Honorary Rangers it is part of their lifestyle. This factor has not been identified in the literature reviewed in the field of conservation to the best of the author's knowledge.

- **Factor 5: Fun and escape**

This factor had the second lowest mean value of 3.65 and alludes to the fact that Honorary Rangers engage in this type of activity because it gives them a chance to escape, while it is also fun to do. Whilst escape is regarded as the most common motive in travel and tourism (Kruger, Viljoen & Saayman 2015:81), generally, it has not been found in the volunteer literature. The same applies for the fun motive.

5. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The first finding of this research alludes to the profile or question who are the Honorary Rangers which revealed noteworthy results, namely that they volunteer primarily or solely as Honorary Rangers and not for other causes or in other organisations.

Contrary to the findings of Finkelstein (2009:435) and Wilson (2000:215) these results show that more males than females volunteer as Honorary Rangers. They also spend a significant number of days per year in national parks as volunteers and they spend approximately R10 000 per year on transport, food and beverages. Since most of these parks are located in rural areas, the importance of this activity as part of their *lifestyle* is confirmed. In Table 1 it

is clear that they started volunteering as an Honorary Ranger at a rather mature age of 50 and it would be worthwhile to understand the reasons why they started at such a late stage in their lives.

One possible reason could be the time and cost implications associated with being an Honorary Ranger, which makes it difficult for low or no income persons to become involved in this type of activity. This aspect therefore requires further research; since for the future of SANParks and conservation, it would be important to increase the number of younger rangers and even expand this activity to provincial parks as well as local parks.

It is furthermore important to note that the activities that Honorary Rangers are involved in cover a wide variety of skills and further research should determine to what extent their qualifications and expertise played a role in the decision to become a ranger. One could therefore say that Honorary Rangers are well established individuals in terms of employment and income with approximately 20% who are retired. It therefore implies that if SANParks Honorary Rangers want to increase their numbers, this profile is quite useful for marketing and planning purposes.

The second finding addresses the question of why do people volunteer? This finding revealed that the combination of motives has not been found in the volunteer literature and therefore supports the work undertaken by Kruger and Saayman (2010:93) and Moutinho (1987:3) that motives of individuals differ from one person to the next as well as from one activity to another. This also revealed that frameworks developed by various researchers such as Brown and Lehto (2005:479), Clary *et al.* (1998:1516), Deery *et al.* (2011:313), Dwyer *et al.* (2013:181) and Otoo and Amuquandoh (2014:51) are not applicable with regard to volunteering in conservation organisations or national parks in South Africa.

It is therefore clear from the results that *conservation, lifestyle and socialisation and group affiliation* can be regarded as the primary motives with *fun and escape* and *career development* as the secondary motives for Honorary Rangers. From the results it seems that the motives of volunteers in conservation or more specifically Honorary Rangers can be grouped in primary versus secondary motives.

This framework is proposed but has to be confirmed. New motives include *conservation, lifestyle* and *fun and escape*. The lifestyle motive is supported by the fact that 55% of rangers volunteer only as SANParks Honorary Rangers and they spend a significant number

of days and amount of money in national parks. If one applies the intrinsic versus extrinsic theory it is also clear that most of the motives with the exception of career development are intrinsic. The implication of the above is that from a practical point of view Honorary Rangers are people for whom conservation is part of their lifestyle so one would find them travelling regularly to national parks and they enjoy the company of likeminded people. They therefore seem to be loyal visitors to national parks.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this exploratory research was to gain greater insight into the profile and motives of SANParks Honorary Rangers (conservation volunteers). To the author's knowledge, this is the first time that this study has been conducted amongst SANParks Honorary Rangers. The research has revealed noteworthy results, especially when one looks at the motives of being a volunteer in national parks.

In the case of Honorary Rangers, it is a *lifestyle* choice which implies that one spends a significant amount of time and money in advancing conservation in national parks. This exerts a very positive impact on the resources of SANParks since these volunteers carry some of the burdens of the activities that must be carried out in any case. This implies that SANParks can use their own resources to address the many other conservation challenges that face them. These volunteers also generate additional funding, since 22% of their activities concern fundraising for various projects. Therefore, it is not only the amount that they pay from their own pockets, but also the amount of money that they generate for monitoring parks and conserving the biodiversity.

This research makes several contributions, since it not only profiles SANParks Honorary Rangers and highlights their motives, but it also positions these volunteers in the context of research conducted by several other researchers and expands the knowledge of volunteering in conservation areas or protected areas. Based on this and other similar research, it is also clear that much more research in this field is needed in order to fully comprehend how and why people are willing to become a volunteer.

Future research should also include volunteers who are involved in specific programs for example the conservation of penguins, or tigers or rhino's to name but a few. In addition it would be valuable if the economic impact of these activities in developing countries such as

South Africa can be determined. The research also revealed that these types of volunteers differ significantly from other volunteers. It is further important to note that they have clearly identified primary motives, namely *conservation*, *lifestyle* and *social and group affiliation* and two less important secondary motives, namely *fun and escape* and *career development*.

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