What we know about volunteer tourism – an approach to motivations and impacts

José Abreu* and Marisa R. Ferreira

CIICESI, ESTG,
Politécnico do Porto,
Rua do Curral, Casa do Curral,
Margaride 4610-156 Felgueiras, Portugal
Email: jpta92@gmail.com
Email: mjf@estg.ipp.pt
*Corresponding author

Abstract: Generally defined as an activity in which people decide to volunteer in development or conservation projects, voluntourism is one of the most fast-growing alternative tourism markets, arousing interest from several different people and creating an increasing number of volunteers. These developments are being used by many organisations has a way of using volunteers' expertise's as important benefits. Our paper analyses and describes the concept of voluntourism, as well as the motivations that drive the volunteers, and the impacts or benefits of their projects experience in the host community and in themselves. We did a literature review, firstly using a bibliometric analysis, to deeply understand and categorise the generic concept. Secondly, we did ten exploratory online interviews/questionnaires to volunteers with experiences in international volunteering programs. The results show that this topic have become a trend in recent years and that understanding the motivations of volunteers as well as the benefits and impacts of the projects are essential to the development of voluntourism.

Keywords: voluntourism; volunteer; international.

Biographical notes: José Abreu is a Master student in Master Program in Business and International Management and graduated of Environment Management in the University of Porto.

Marisa R. Ferreira is an Associate Professor of Marketing, Nonprofit Marketing, Strategy, and Corporate Social Responsibility in Undergraduate, and an MSc at the School of Management and Technology of Felgueiras, Polytechnic Institute of Porto. She is a researcher at the CIICESI and she received her PhD in Business Management from the Faculty of Economics, University of Porto.

1 Introduction

During the last years, voluntary service programs have emerged in many countries (Bartram et al., 2017; Garland et al., 2009; Tõnurist and Surva, 2016; Tukamushaba et al., 2017; Yashima, 2010), and these programs are trying to encourage more pro-social behaviours. Volunteerism is increasing due to many factors (Bruyere and Rappe, 2007) and the trend toward the need for more public participation is increasing, since there are several moral appeals telling us to be more socially responsible, more environmentally friendly, or more caring towards the less-privileged (Sin, 2010). Nowadays world faces serious problems and work collaboratively with others from different cultural backgrounds can bring significant understandings (Yashima, 2010), so international volunteering plays an important role in shaping mobilities across unequal global spaces (Smith et al., 2013).

Each year, governments, inter-governmental organisations, educational and faith-based organisations, NGOs and other stakeholders spend millions of dollars on promoting, marketing, and administering international volunteer programs (Lough et al., 2018), being that international volunteering is increasingly developing new forms and expressions of global citizenship (Smith et al., 2013). International volunteering can be defined as "an organized period of engagement and contribution to society by volunteers, who work across an international border in another country or countries" [Sherraden et al., (2008), p.397]. Similarly, the United Nations emphasises international volunteering and services as 'actions carried out freely without coercion' not motivated by 'financial gain' and benefiting those 'other than the volunteer' (Devereux, 2008). In several European countries there has been a rise in the number of programs and support packages available for young volunteers. Everyone is talking about gap years, and many young people use this chance to take time out between leaving school and starting a career (Mangold, 2012). This significant rise, has been taken as an opportunity for an alternative form of tourism, who has been now commonly called 'volunteer tourism' or 'voluntourism', and has been defined broadly as individuals engagement in volunteer work while travelling, "regardless of whether the volunteer work is the sole purpose of their vacation" [Guttentag and Wiley, (2009), p.538], or "individuals who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment" [Wearing, (2001), p.1]. So, international development volunteering generally refers to individuals who spend a period of time working in the Global South with the aim of promoting development (McGloin and Georgeou, 2016), although the straightforwardness inherent to this definition may include some subjectivity related to the volunteer role and/or the specificities of some circumstances and/or contexts.

Generically, the literature does not feature any review that presents, with a wide perspective, the state-of-the-art on volunteer tourism. If we believe that collaborations among different cultural backgrounds can bring substantial understandings and that volunteer tourism may be an important materialisation of these relationships, thus attracting and managing these scarce resources is an important goal that requires attention from research. So, in order to overcome the shortcomings identified in the literature, our research intend to analyse and describes the concept of voluntourism, and mostly focus on the motivations of volunteers and what drives them to venture into this kind of actions, as well as identify the impacts on them and in the host community. Thus, we seek to

present the trends and evolution of research carried out upon volunteer tourism including both the theoretical and empirical studies in all journals indexed in the ISI Web of Knowledge. In order to achieve this objective, we did:

1   the characterisation of the literature on volunteer tourism, both by year and by the quantity of the articles published

2   the identification, analyses and discussion of the keywords grouped in different clusters

3   an exploratory qualitative analysis in order to

   •   verify the proximity to the presented literature review

   •   present potential future lines of research.

Doing so, we expect to be capable to better understand the human capital of the international volunteers, maximising their experience as well as the hosts.

2   Volunteer tourism

Within the discourses of international volunteering and development programs as well as in the voices of volunteers, the field can be understood as one of unpaid transnational labour, as social activism and altruism, and as a new 'soft power' in post-colonial agenda (Jackson and Adarlo, 2016). Although, the majority of international volunteering programs are economic activities driven by profit occurring within an unregulated industry and working without accreditation procedures (McGloin and Georgeou, 2016). Travellers rebelled against package trips and resorts and wanted a more authentic experience, and they are willing to pay for it, they want a different travel experience that can be more morally conscious, while at the same time it provides opportunities for economic gain for the organisations that act as brokers of such experiences (Tomazos and Cooper, 2012).

Volunteer tourism occurs in various forms including travelling for internship, study tour, international gap year, student exchange programs, charity work, service-learning programs and career break. If university projects were designed through a language of service learning instead of promoting their experience with a volunteering language of 'making a difference', 'doing something worthwhile' or 'contributing to the future of others' (Simpson, 2004), would host organisations and university students embrace the experience with the same type of openness, commitment and genuine interest (Palacios, 2010)? Irrespective of the forms volunteer tourism takes, motivations are crucial for travel (Otoo, 2014; Tukamushaba et al., 2017).

At the heart of the volunteer tourism experience a fundamental tension remains between the ascribed roles of 'volunteer' and 'tourist' (Wearing, 2001). When present, this tension may have a fundamental impact on the volunteer tourist experience as well as on project outcomes for local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), communities or other stakeholders (Coghlan, 2015).

It is necessary to understand where volunteer tourism stands. "Is it merely another tourism niche, another minor blip on the tourism radar screen; is it an emerging, more sustainable form of tourism; or does it truly represent the potential for a major paradigm shift as a completely decommodified form of tourism?" (Wearing and McGehee, 2013)

Several voluntourism programs are managed by tour operators that use intensively a language of humanitarian development in order to trade on the idea that they send people to 'help' others in dire need of assistance (McGloin and Georgeou, 2016).

The volunteer tourism industry has now progressed into a macro niche (Stainton, 2016), and the growing commercialisation mobilised to support the demand for diverse volunteer tourism experiences (Wearing and McGehee, 2013) creates some threats to the sustainability of this model and to the long-term positives outcomes for both the host community and the volunteers. Organisations must find ways to recruit and engage volunteers that are committed to sustainable and lasting practices and that will truly engage the community in which they serve (Smith et al., 2014).

3   Methodology

In order to reach our previously mentioned objectives, firstly, we applied secondary data sourced from the ISI Web of Knowledge database. Bibliometric mapping is a powerful tool for studying the structure and the dynamics of scientific fields (Koseoglu et al., 2016). Key bibliometric indicators include the number of articles, the number of authors, authors' productivity, and the productivity of countries or journals (Ruhanen et al., 2015). In this paper, we used VosViewer software, for term extraction from abstracts and title and associate the different authors based on their co-citation number. We benefit from cluster analysis to better describe the field in study. Briefly, this part of the study aims to map the whole structure and correlations among terms and authors in voluntourism field.

Secondly, we did a qualitative study (through a small questionnaire that includes nine questions), we used Google forms and the questionnaire was disseminated through social media, our main objective is verify if the international experience of some specific volunteers presents similarities to the main aspects mentioned in our theoretical review.

4   Results and discussion

4.1   Bibliometric study

The data used for this study can be found in the Web of Science (WoS) articles database. We made our search using just published articles in this well-known online database (Meho and Yang, 2007; Oakleaf, 2009). We defined the selection of papers, using the following combinations of keywords: TS = ('voluntourism') or TS = ('volunteer tourism') or TS = ('international volunteer'); in order to cover all papers that relates the same concepts or similar used in the literature. Using WoS, we were able to refine the results obtained to refer only articles in the field, what gave us a total of 245 papers to work with. From those 245 articles, there's a total of 401 authors and more than 3,000 citations.

In Figures 1 and 2, we can observe the evolution of the topic in the last years, which have been constantly evolving, both in number of publications and citations for year. Those results show the significance that voluntourism is reaching, not only in general society but also in the academic field. This may be seen as a necessity to understand, develop or study the multidisciplinary of this issue and the multiple organisations or individuals who contribute for this growth.

Figure 1   Number of articles published each year (see online version for colours)
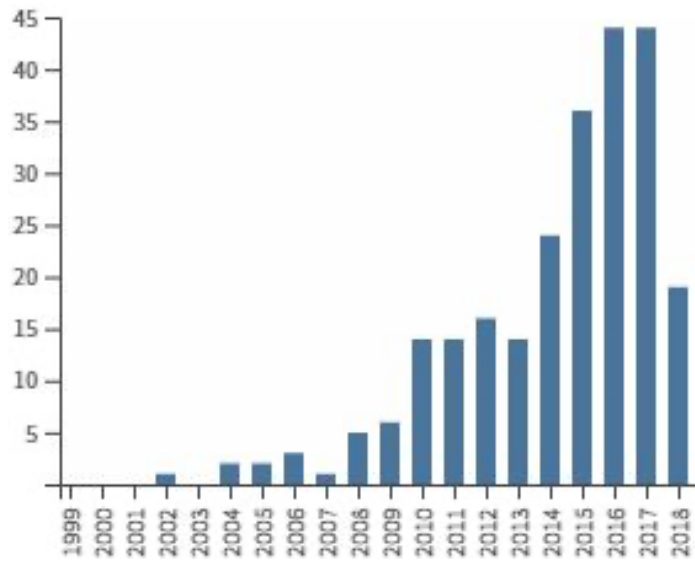
Source: WoS

**Figure 2**   Number of citations each year (see online version for colours)
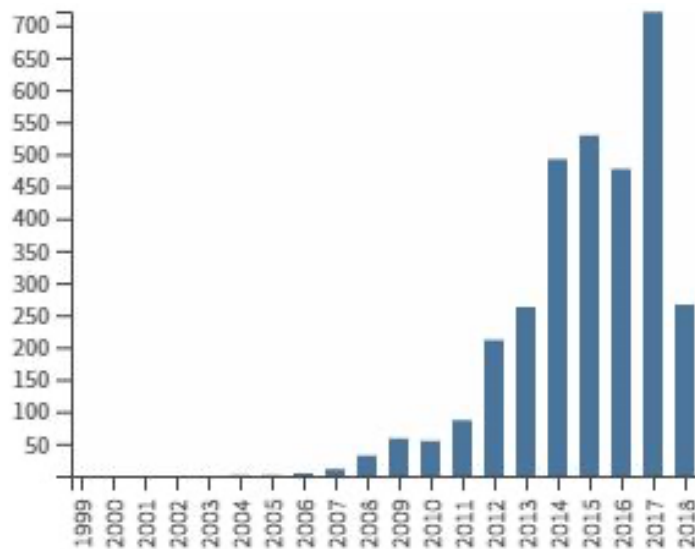

Source: WoS

4.2   Term map

Utilising VosViewer, it was possible to create a cluster map based on the text of our data. Doing a search in the title and abstract of all the papers included in our database, and with a number of occurrences of the term of at least 20, the results showed that at least 35 terms met the threshold. Of the 35 terms, 14 were eliminated because they commonly appear in all the papers and has no direct connection with the topic such as: literature, data, paper, analysis, study, type, article and others.

The colours on both maps (see Figures 3 and 4) were randomly choose by the software and do not maintain any kind of relation or importance, and is only used to signal the clusters.

Figure 3   Map of co-occurrence of terms, developed from data base WoS with the use of
VosViewer software (see online version for colours)
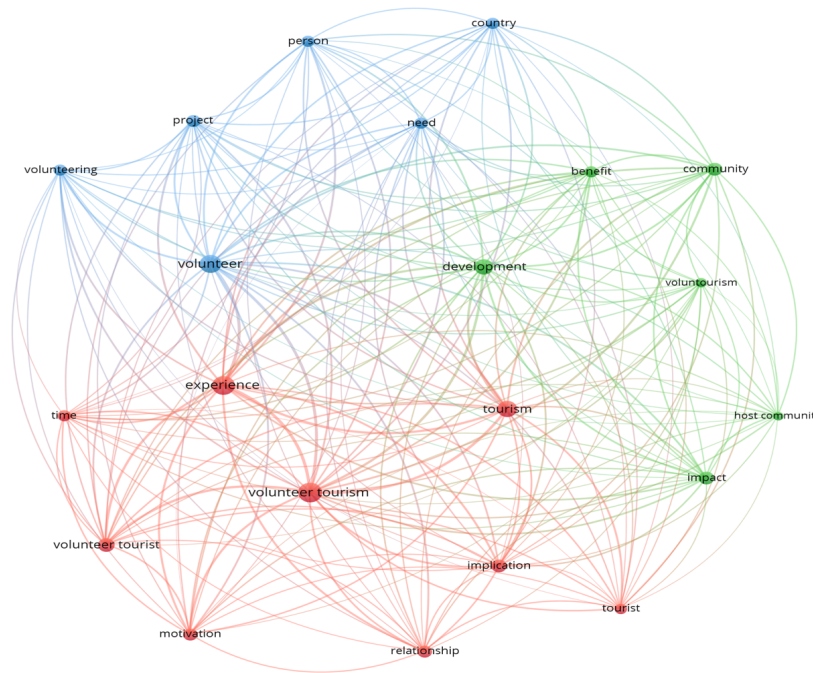
Figure 4   Map of co-citations cited authors, developed from database WoS with the use of
VosViewer software (see online version for colours)
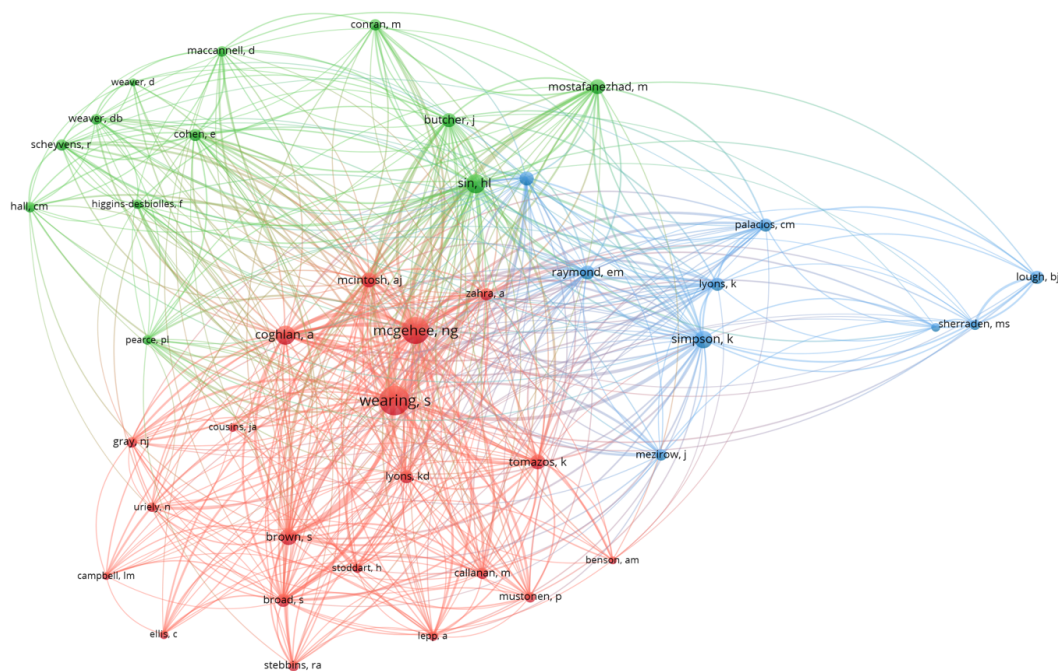
Looking for the map alone, besides the topic words as volunteer, tourism or volunteer
tourism, there are two that easily stand out: experience and development. Experience was
the word most times cited referring to the voluntourism experience as the activity, and
not specifically to the volunteer or organisation experience as in number of times; in
other hand, development was used multiple times referring to the volunteer skills, to the
organisation's projects or even to the host community.

4.2.1 Green cluster – impacts

This cluster groups words like community, benefit or impact, and so we can identify it as the cluster that mention impacts. The recent growth of this field left a lot of lacks to cover, both in the volunteer or the host community perspective. It is important not only to understand the different benefits and impacts of both, but also to draw a line between the volunteer and the tourist experience (Coghlan, 2015).

A lot of impacts can come from the volunteer experience, both for the volunteer itself as well as to the host community and to agencies involved. Traditionally, such volunteerism has been held as beneficial, both to host (typically developing) countries (commonly designated as the global south) and communities, and to volunteers (and their communities of origin): as a promising act of peaceful cultural exchange, facilitating productive dialog, and experience across boundaries and, in the process, bridging cultures in ways that can enhance future crossnational engagement (Bodomo, 2012). Considering that the outcomes can be either negative or positive and depend on a lot of factors, like the project, the host community or the volunteer himself, we grouped all the outcomes considering the volunteers and the community (see Tables 1 and 2), in order to more easily identify and match the outcomes with the stakeholders.

Table 1   Volunteers outcomes

Impacts	*Authors*
Work experience and skills	Devereux (2008) and Sherraden et al. (2008)
Personal development	Guttentag and Wiley (2009), Van Willigen (2000), Devereux (2008), Sherraden et al. (2008) and Cnaan et al. (2010)
Intercultural competence and language skills	Guttentag and Wiley (2009), Bodomo (2012), and Sherraden et al. (2008)
International knowledge and understanding	Guttentag and Wiley (2009), Bodomo (2012) and Sherraden et al. (2008)
Civic and global engagement	Cnaan et al. (2010) and Smith et al. (2013)
Professional growth	Cnaan et al. (2010) and Sherraden et al. (2008)

Table 2   Host community outcomes

Impacts	*Author*
Social, economic, environmental, or political conditions	Guttentag and Wiley (2009) and Loiseau et al. (2016)
Intercultural knowledge, understanding and skills	Loiseau et al. (2016), McGehee and Santos (2005) and Palacios (2010)
Neglect of locals' desires or needs	Guttentag and Wiley (2009), Devereux (2008) and Sherraden et al. (2008)
Global engagement	Loiseau et al. (2016) and Simpson (2004)
Paternalism and dependency	Guttentag and Wiley (2009), Sherraden et al. (2008), Carpenter (2015) and McGehee (2012)
Host organisation capacity	Loiseau et al. (2016) and Jackson and Adarlo (2016)
Environmental conservation	Sherraden et al. (2008)

Considering the volunteer point of view, we can say that they can benefit from the work experience and skills development, the personal development, a more intercultural

competence and language skills, a better international knowledge and understanding, more civic and global engagement, and we can group these aspects in a wider category that we call professional growth (Table 1).

Volunteer tourism experience appears to have a strong impact upon a participant's sense of self, or their identity and how they view themselves in relation to others (Coghlan, 2015). In their survey of international volunteers, Liz Jackson found that most of the respondents commonly described their experiences as more positive than negative, and define their service as not only personally satisfying but also transformational particularly to the development of transnational or global work skills development (Jackson and Adarlo, 2016).

We can also mention some other impacts related with personal development and international knowledge, like see the destination more closely, get more involved with the local community people, including the increase of cross-cultural communication and empathy (Fairley et al., 2007), eventually changing the perspectives people have about different countries. At the same time, we can also mention the existence of higher levels of civic and engagement, since the majority of international volunteers' work, essentially, with people who are otherwise neglected by society in some way, or even some form of a minority, fostering social inclusion (Smith et al., 2013).

Volunteer tourism may be powered by noble feelings, but may be built on perverse economics and may have the potential to produce negative impacts on the individuals and communities involved as well (Guttentag and Wiley, 2009); such as the neglect of locals desires, a hindering of work progress and completion of unsatisfactory work, a disruption of local economies, a reinforcement of conceptualisations of the 'other' and rationalisations of poverty, and an instigation of cultural changes (Guttentag and Wiley, 2009). A problem emerges when tourists desires may be considered before the needs and desires of host communities (Guttentag and Wiley, 2009). Some authors have questioned the benefits and impacts that can be provided by volunteer tourists who potentially do not have useful skills, are not familiar with the local culture, and only stay for a very short period of time (Simpson, 2004; Callanan and Thomas, 2005) may not only impede work progress and may actually perform unsatisfactory work (Guttentag and Wiley, 2009). Also, training provided by volunteer organisations should recognise that adjustment to cultural difference extends outside the in-country stage and incorporate readjustment to the home culture on return (Grabowski-Faulkner et al., 2016).

Just because a community is hosting a volunteer tourism project, we ca not assume that the community will inevitably benefit economically. In fact, the presence of volunteer labourers may have the opposite effect and may actually negatively impact labour demand or promote dependency (Guttentag and Wiley, 2009). A lot of newspaper news mention, for example, that in Cambodia there are a lot of concerns with orphanage tourism, especially with visitors' donations, that may be creating dependency and that may be unsustainable (Carpenter, 2015). The contact between volunteer tourists and a host community, which in some cases may be poor and have little previous experience with tourists, may in fact function to negatively impact the host culture (Guttentag and Wiley, 2009). Some authors (Martin and Griffiths, 2012; Jackson and Adarlo, 2016) argue that, instead of challenging hegemonic worldviews and colonial patterns, international volunteering and service actually perpetuates and reinforces, the very stereotypes and attitudes the international volunteers seek to change especially when government representatives get involved with host-country civic life, potentially undermining empowerment of those served and promoting more powerful states'

interests and 'soft power' political agendas. All these impacts are grouped and presented in Table 2.

Volunteer tourism today is a personal and lifestyle strategy to make a difference to the world (Butcher, 2011). Reframing poverty as a sight of tourist consumption through volunteer tourism perpetuates a helping narrative that subscribes to the geopolitical discourse of North-South relations that both depoliticises and naturalises global inequality. Photographic practices and social media outlets are important sites where these geopolitical narratives are extended (Mostafanezhad, 2014). Highlight the pertinent issues in volunteer tourism, especially those from the locals' perspectives, in hope that as we rush headlong toward attempts to be responsible through volunteering while on holiday, we do not forgot to ask the important questions (Sin, 2010). Conran (2011) suggest that the problems which volunteer tourism seeks to address are the outcome, rather than the cause of underdevelopment.

While this does not mean that volunteer tourism is without value for the volunteers and the communities they visit, it does suggest that it is essential for programs to be carefully developed and managed.

4.2.2   *Blue cluster – volunteer perspective and red cluster – volunteer tourist perspective*

The blue and red cluster, both mention motivations, although we can say that the blue cluster includes motivations closely related to volunteer role highlighting volunteering rather than tourism, and red cluster, although also state motivations, it seems that somehow groups volunteer tourism motivations in a narrower group, although both of them talk about motivations, so we will make this analysis together.

The volunteer perspective, especially when they follow altruistic motivations is essential to the sustainability and development of voluntourism. These clusters refers to the volunteer perspective and their needs.

There is a need to understand the motivations of the volunteer tourist (Wearing and McGehee, 2013) and it is imperative for empirical examination of tourist motivation to be undertaken, since this will help to identify the attributes that must be promoted (Kozak, 2001). To better identify these motivations it is also necessary to look closely to the intensification of specific sensations, emotions and effect of empathic pain, triggered by everyday encounters in particular tourism contexts can tell us much about the shifting connections that define how an individual dwells within the world and helps assign meaning to place, self and others (Frazer and Waitt, 2016).

Influence of age, gender, project type and length of stay were found to have an impact on the volunteer experience (Alexander, 2012). For example, international volunteers tend to be below the age of 35 (Sin, 2009; McIntosh and Zahra, 2007; Wearing, 2001) mainly females (Shantz et al., 2014) and they tend to be more occasional than regular volunteers.

Motivation can be defined by a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration. Is a psychological process resulting from the interaction between the individual and the environment (Latham and Pinder, 2005). Clary et al. (1996) suggested six broad functions served by volunteering. These are the opportunities to express one's values related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others (values), opportunities for new learning experiences, and to exercise one's knowledge, skills and abilities

(understanding), opportunities to be with one's friends or to engage in an activity viewed favourably by others (social), experiences that may be obtained from participation in volunteer work (career), reduced guilt over being more fortunate than others and addressing one's own personal problems (protective), and the ego's growth and development (enhancement).

A large variety of different motives for volunteering were found: a thirst for adventure, travel and explore the world, improve language skills, escape from everyday life, opportunity to gain work-related experience, celebrities' instigation and finding oneself, are the most common motivations identified in the literature, that we classified as self-interest motivations (see Table 3). Help others, do good, feeling useful, make the best of a bad situation or making a difference to others, are some other responses of volunteers who are more linked to altruistic motivations (see Table 3).

The seek for cultural immersion and camaraderie are also identify in the literature, being that, these aspects can be considered different from either self-interest motivations or altruism (Wearing and McGehee, 2013) and may be classified into the label desire of human connection (see Table 3).

Table 3 Volunteers tourism motivations

Motivations		*Authors*
Self-interest	Opportunity to gain work-related experience	Jackson and Adarlo (2016) and Cnaan et al. (2010)
	To respond to their needs or skills	Cnaan et al. (2010)
	Travel	Mostafanezhad (2014) and Wearing and McGehee (2013)
	Escape from everyday life	Wearing and McGehee (2013)
	Celebrities instigation	Mostafanezhad (2014)
	Self-discover	Mostafanezhad (2014) and Rehberg (2005)
Human connection	Seeking camaraderie	Wearing and McGehee (2013) and Bruyere and Rappe (2007)
	Cultural immersion	Mostafanezhad (2014), Jackson and Adarlo (2016), Wearing and McGehee (2013) and Rehberg (2005)
Altruistic	Helping others	Jackson and Adarlo (2016), Cnaan et al. (2010) and Rehberg (2005)
	Feeling useful	Jackson and Adarlo (2016)
	Making a difference to other	Mostafanezhad (2014) and Smith et al. (2013)

The classification in Table 3 is inspired in many authors (Rehberg, 2005; Wearing and McGehee, 2013; Smith et al., 2014) who present wide considerations about the most appropriate way of classify motivations, since is crucial for organisations understand the reasons that individuals use to specific programs and destinations.

Callanan and Thomas (2005) propose a conceptual framework of volunteer tourist motivation that includes three types (shallow, intermediate and deep volunteer tourists) based on six main criteria: destination, duration of project, focus of experience (self-interest versus altruistic), qualifications, active versus passive participation, and level of contribution to locals. If motivations were the only criteria, we could consider

that a shallow volunteer focus mostly on himself and on self-interest motivations; a intermediate volunteer could have both kind of motivations, because, and as the authors explains, self-interest and altruistic motivations are not entirely mutually exclusive (Otoo, 2014); and a deep volunteer has a more altruistic view, thinking about the others and the project itself first.

So, we can say that for the experience to be not only replicated, but also better managed and developed, it is necessary to understand what motivates volunteer tourists. Offering a large variety of experiences it is essential for this micro niche, not only in time (days, weeks, months) but also in the type of experience (educational, medical, environmental), and with multiple cultural contexts so that more people can join and integrate the international volunteer and fulfil is needs (Raymond and Hall, 2008).

4.3 Co-citation map – cited authors

Using a minimum of 25 citations for each author, it was possible to divide the different authors in three distinct clusters evaluating the number of times they are cited together. This map was considered important because of the resemblance with the term maps.

It is possible to compare for instance the author's main topics in the blue cluster with the green cluster of the term map with impacts, being it constantly discussed and focused. Volunteer tourism seems to provide a more reciprocally beneficial form of travel in which both the volunteer and the host communities are able to gain from the experience (Raymond and Hall, 2008). It can produce various positive outcomes for the host and sending organisations in terms of intercultural understanding (Palacios, 2010) and may increase knowledge and interest in international issues and affairs and participants' respect for diversity and relationships with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures (Lough et al., 2014). Optimism towards volunteer tourism has been complemented by a fairly uncritical approach towards the sector, when in reality it should be critically analysed just like any other form of tourism (Guttentag and Wiley, 2009).

The authors topics of the green cluster also have some similarities, with volunteer motivations and responsibilities being the most relevant issues discussed what goes in accordance with the blue and red cluster on the term map.

Finally, the red cluster includes a lot of theories and exploratory processes described and analysed, such as social movements and behaviours in an attempt to, widely, contextualise the topic. The expansion of the theoretical foundations of volunteer tourism; the self-interest versus altruism debate; volunteer tourism organisations as agents of change or simply a new version of commodification; the opportunity for volunteer tourism to create a new paradigm in tourism that places the community at the centre; and the transformative potential of the post-trip volunteer tourist (Wearing and McGehee, 2013) are some of the pertinent issues discussed and grouped into this red cluster.

5   Qualitative analysis and discussion

In order to verify the proximity to the presented literature review, we did an exploratory qualitative analysis, being that qualitative studies are considerate an important method of study to better understand the entire field (Lough et al., 2018; Raymond and Hall, 2008).

For this study only, the volunteer perspective was considerate, we have ten answers from ten different volunteers with international experience.

Table 4   Characterisation of the volunteer

Volunteer	Gender	Number of experiences	Type of experience	Project length (months)	Country
V1	F	3	Medical	3	Mozambique, Bangladesh and Croatia
V2	F	1	Educational	6	Mozambique
V3	F	2	Social	7	Mozambique
V4	F	1	Educational	2	East-Timor
V5	M	2	Educational	2	East-Timor
V6	M	1	Educational	2	East-Timor
V7	F	1	Medical	3	Kenya
V8	M	1	Missionary	1	Mozambique
V9	F	1	Educational/community development	2	Mozambique
V10	F	5	Educational/social	2	Mozambique

As we can observe on Table 4, seven of the respondents were female what reinforces the argument presented in the theoretical literature, that woman are more prone for taking this kind of experiences (Chatwin and Ackers, 2016; Shantz et al., 2014). Another question was the number of experiences in international volunteering programs already taken, and six people only went one time, other two had two international experiences, and the others had three or more.

For all the forward answers we ask the volunteers to take in consideration only the project where they were inserted for more time. The type of the project was also taken in consideration, where more than half of the sample travel to support educational programs, two for medical support, and the others were divided in social and missionary experiences. If we consider the countries where the programs were taken, mostly Mozambique and East-Timor, countries listed in the 50 least developed countries, again we reinforce another argument mentioned in the theoretical review previously presented, that mentions the intervention of international volunteers in the Global South with the aim of stimulating development (McGloin and Georgeou, 2016).

5.1   International volunteers' motivations, benefits and impacts

We asked the volunteers what where their main motivation and answers like 'willing to serve', 'helping the needy', 'contribute to reduce the global inequalities' and 'transmitting knowledge' were the most mentioned, and we consider it more altruistic reasons. Self-interest reasons were also founded with, 'experience', 'personal valorisation' or 'self-discover' (see Table 5). Self-interest and altruism are not entirely mutually exclusive and volunteer tourists are quite able to possess multiple motivations simultaneously (Otoo, 2014; Rehberg, 2005), and this situation has not generally been viewed as reason for concern (Guttentag and Wiley, 2009). When we ask them to classify their experience, according their personal view as well as in the community view, almost

all of them mentioned 'personal growth' as an important personal outcome, some said a 'transformative experience' or 'it is like there is one before and one after the mission' (V6), highlighting the intensity of their experiences, and sometimes these experiences opens moral gateways for volunteers to reflect on and challenge their privileged life (Frazer and Waitt, 2016). The professional growth is also referred by some, when they talk about 'sharing opinions', 'adapt' and 'overcome the lack of resources' (V10). Generically, all the motivations mentioned by the volunteers have been mentioned in the theoretical review, being that the more altruistic ones are more iterant.

Table 5   Motivations, benefits and negative impacts

Volunteer	Motivations	Benefits	Negative impacts
V1	Experience	Personal and professional growth	Defective activities coordination, wrong motives for volunteering, host dependency
V2	To give to opportunities others	Personal growth, how to live in a community not putting myself first	Projects abandonment, lack of community empowerment
V3	Being able to comeback	Learning	Mental stability of the volunteer, lack of community empowerment, neglect of local's needs and desires
V4	Willing to serve	Transformative experience, personal growth, shaping the younger minds	Low length, neglect of local's needs and desires, host dependency, wrong motives for volunteering
V5	Knowledge transference	Teach us how to be humble	Neglects of local's needs and desires,
V6	Help in the human development	Transformative experience, it's like there is one before and one after the mission	Voluntourism, abandonment of the projects
V7	Willing to serve, personal valorisation, self-discover	Personal growth, benefit the community	Momentary and low sustainable results, host dependency, interference and unaware of the host culture and religion
V8	Help the needy	Personal growth	None
V9	Willing to serve	Personal growth, perception of the need of the community, community development	Host dependency, neglects of locals needs and desire's
V10	Reduce the global inequalities	Personal growth, volunteers work like 'facilitators'	Neglects of local's needs and desires, interference and unaware of the host culture and religion

Some of the volunteers mentioned some barriers in the community and their need to work like 'facilitators' (V10) where the needs and desires of the community have always to be taken into consideration (V4, V5, V9, V10). We can also see the existence of an 'occasional unsustainable, though, positive impact' (V7) what drives in the direction of

the educational difficulty felt by others who said that "2 months were a little time to fill all the gaps existent specially in the younger ones" (V4). Actually, voluntourism, in contrast with other volunteering formats, requires less individual time commitment as the experience of development is combined with travel (McGloin and Georgeou, 2016).

So, considering the aspects related to the international volunteering programs impacts on volunteers, the majority of volunteers mentioned, mostly, positive impacts. Only one negative impact was referred related to the mental stability of the volunteer, and it seems to be related with the shocks they may suffer when they first reach the local community what takes in consideration the need of a previous preparation for what they must encounter while in the project (Lough et al., 2018).

On the community side, many negative impacts were identified by the volunteers: the 'wrong motivations of the volunteer', the 'bad coordination of the volunteer activities', the 'abandonment of the projects', the 'neglects of the host needs and desires' and the 'dependency caused', all impacts were seen in the literature review, what goes accordingly with other experiences seen before. Some of the volunteers go even far and explain that it is necessary to take a constructive thought, taking in consideration not only the host community needs, but also their culture and religion and try to capacitate them accordingly "it's no use for them if we build, if they don't know how to use what we build" (V2). We cannot inflict our ideas, our way of life or culture "in one way we are given them the opportunity to know different things, but on the other hand we are modifying patterns and creating dreams that sometimes distance themselves immensely from their realities" (V7). Although, literature mention several negative impacts in the community (Devereux, 2008; Guttentag and Wiley, 2009), they are not necessarily inevitable, and can likely be mitigated when projects are properly planned and managed (Guttentag and Wiley, 2009; Raymond and Hall, 2008) and when the host communities, who are the recipients of mass tourism have little or no ability to influence its construction (Lyons and Wearing, 2007).

6   Conclusions and future research

Understanding how and when volunteer tourists regard themselves as volunteers, and when they adopt the persona of tourist is important to the success of the volunteer tourism experience and sector as a whole (Coghlan, 2015). For volunteer tourism to succeed it has to be sustainable for both the social and natural environments, not becoming another form of tourism based mainly on the profits (Wearing and McGehee, 2013).

The bibliometric approach evidenced the recent growth of the field and the importance that has been given to this topic by several authors, presenting impacts and motivations as two main areas that groups the existing literature.

The qualitative approach, showed volunteers' perspective, and we can mention the necessity of mostly develop the host community capacities sustainably taking in consideration their needs and human rights. Changing the target of the field is necessary because the focus is very addressed to the volunteers needs, when in fact must be addressed on the host community needs. Outcomes for host communities, volunteers, and sending communities will vary depending on volunteer attributes and individual capacity, as well as program attributes and institutional capacity (Sherraden et al., 2008).

It is hoped that continued research into this topic will contribute to the development of volunteer tourism as a unique form of tourism that facilitates positive international understanding and solidarity. Volunteering is not the problem, and neither is tourism, it is the politics and political claims behind and around international volunteer tourism that might be problematic (Butcher, 2011).

In terms of future research, some lines can be identified, like:

1   Improve the understanding, through the exploration of the sustainability of the phenomenon, one suggestion is analyse volunteer tourism just like any other form of tourism (Guttentag and Wiley, 2009) and is of crucial importance that researchers develop empirical evidence that can provide a deep and critical understanding of volunteer tourism (Lyons et al., 2012) so that the impacts can be mitigated and that a more sustainable development can be achieved.

2   Another suggestion for future research may include the sending organisation perspective, since the scope of this review is very focused on the volunteer and host community.

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