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ABSTRACT

This study utilizes a factor-cluster analysis to determine segments of potential volunteer tourists based on their motivations for participating in volunteer tourism experiences. Three segments emerged, Volunteers, Voluntourists, and Tourists, and were subsequently compared across their expectations for transformative learning opportunities in volunteer tourism experiences. Three components of transformative learning are considered: self-reflection, engaging in dialogue, and intercultural experiences (Taylor, 2008). Each segment was found to hold different expectations of the components of a transformative learning experience, suggesting that in order to fully engage in such an experience and gain its benefits each segment requires a customized volunteer tourism program. The study offers implications for future research and managerial action.

Keywords: *Transformative learning, volunteer tourism, segmentation, expectations.*

INTRODUCTION

Volunteer tourism is often seen as a means of facilitating cross cultural understanding between tourists and the host communities they visit (Wearing, 2001). Indeed, many volunteer tourists cite the benefit of cross cultural understanding as a primary motivation for engaging in volunteer tourism activities (Brown, 2005). There is evidence however, that volunteer tourism activities may in fact propagate 'othering' and cultural stereotypes (Raymond and Hall, 2005; Simpson, 2004). Raymond and Hall (2005) propose that these negative impacts may be reduced if volunteer tourism activities are seen as a learning process as opposed to merely an experience.

Transformative Learning Theory has been used to address the call for incorporating education into volunteer tourism experiences (Coghlan and Gooch, 2011). Defined as "the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow, 1996, p. 162), this theory

illustrates the potential benefits of volunteer tourism. Taylor (2008) suggests three components that facilitate the transformative learning process: intercultural experiences, self-reflections, and engaging in dialogue with others. To ensure the benefits of transformative learning are gained through volunteer tourism experience, Coghlan and Gooch (2011) propose that transformative learning centered programs should be connected to the various types of volunteer tourists. Acknowledging the importance of transformative learning to the volunteer tourism experience, this study performs a factor-cluster analysis of potential volunteer tourists' motivations to identify segments of volunteer tourists, and subsequently assess differences in expectations of transformative learning components across the segments of volunteer tourists.

METHODS

Data collection consisted of a survey of potential volunteer tourists' expectations of and motivations for engaging in volunteer tourism. Potential volunteer tourists were recruited through a survey link on the Volontourism.org website that remained open between April 2010 and September 2012. Within this time period 1,008 useable surveys were collected.

Potential volunteer tourists' motivations for participating in volunteer tourism were measured using a 20 item scale based on previous findings (McGehee, Clemmons, and Lee, 2009) that originated with Pearce and Lee's (2005) standard tourism motivations. These motivations were subjected to a Principal Components Factor Analysis using Varimax rotation. Following the factor analysis, the motivational factors were used within a K-means cluster analysis to identify unique types of volunteer tourists. The segments of volunteer tourists' expectations of transformative learning opportunities were then analyzed to see if they varied significantly on expectations for the outcomes of intercultural experiences, self-reflection, and engaging in dialogue with others.

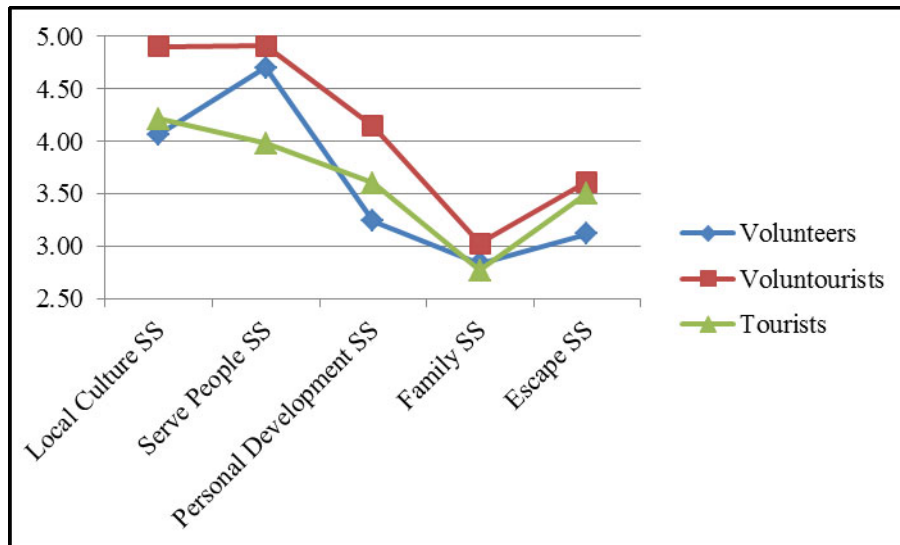
POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER TOURIST SEGMENTATION

The exploratory factor analysis revealed five unique factors explaining 68% of the variance (Table 1). The cluster analysis based on these five motivations revealed three distinct clusters of volunteer tourists that differed significantly in their motivations for potentially engaging in volunteer tourism. The first cluster is labeled 'Volunteers' (n=184) because their motivation to serve people was above average while the more traditional tourism motivations of 'local culture', 'personal development', 'family', and 'escape' were below average (Figure 1). The second cluster was labeled 'Voluntourists' (n=555). This segment had above average responses to both service and the traditional tourist motivations. Lastly, cluster three was labeled 'Tourists' (n=269) based upon their below average desire to serve and their above average focus on the traditional motivations for travel.

Table 1
Exploratory Factor Analysis of Volunteer Tourism Motivations

Factor	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance	Cronbach Alpha
Local Culture		6.75	33.7	.88
to be with people from different cultures	.837			
to meet the local people	.829			
to learn about other people	.752			
to learn new things	.744			
to become immersed in the local culture	.640			
Serve People		2.54	12.68	.87
to make a difference	.847			
to do something meaningful	.821			
to help others	.767			
to give something back	.757			
to combine a love of travel with a desire to give back	.631			
Personal Development		2.03	10.2	.80
to be independent	.762			
to fulfill a dream	.713			
to do something new and different	.687			
to develop my career	.673			
to travel	.666			
Family		1.35	6.8	.78
to strengthen my family relationship	.883			
to strengthen my relationships with friends	.810			
to have an opportunity to educate my children	.784			
Escape		1.01	5.03	.76
to be away from everyday stress	.879			
to be away from daily routine	.832			
Total Variance Explained			68.38%	

Figure 1
Motivations for Volunteer Tourism Across Identified Clusters



EXPECTATIONS OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Following the cluster analysis, these three segments were analyzed for significant differences in their expectations of the three transformative learning components: ‘self reflection’, ‘dialogue with others’, and ‘intercultural experiences’. Two variables addressed the respondents’ expectations of ‘self-reflection’, eleven were used to assess their expectations of ‘dialogue with others’, and eight variables measured their expectations of ‘intercultural experiences’ during the volunteer tourism experience. MANOVA was employed to test for differences in expectations of transformative learning opportunities across the clusters. The results reveal there are significant differences between the clusters for all three components of transformative learning opportunities (Table 2) and demonstrate the following:

- Voluntourists have the highest expectations for self-reflection opportunities and Volunteers have the lowest expectations;
- Voluntourists have the highest expectations for engaging in dialogue with fellow tourists and local residents during all stages of the experience;
- Tourists have the lowest expectations for engaging in dialogue in pre-trip activities and activities during the experience, Volunteers have the lowest expectations for engaging in dialogue in the post-trip experience;
- Voluntourists have the highest expectations for intercultural experiences, whereas both Volunteers and Tourists exhibit lower expectations.

Table 2
MANOVA Testing Differences In Expectations Of Transformative Learning Outcomes
Across Volunteer Tourist Segments

	Volunteers (N=184)	Voluntourists (N=555)	Tourists (N=269)	Sig.
Self-Reflection				
Have opportunities for time by myself	4.07	4.29	4.15	0.001
Individual free time to process experiences	4.00	4.17	4.06	0.00
Engaging in Dialogue				
<i>Pre-trip Expectations</i>				
Group meetings/pre-trip briefings	3.89	3.93	3.70	0.000
An online community of voluntourism participants (both past and upcoming participants)	3.59	3.79	3.55	0.000
<i>Arrival Expectations</i>				
Meet your host team	4.59	4.61	4.45	0.01
Meet your fellow voluntourists	4.53	4.52	4.40	0.06
Introduction to local residents	3.96	4.16	3.97	0.000
<i>Daily Expectations</i>				
Group discussion (eg meeting with staff and fellow voluntourists)	3.67	3.76	3.54	0.01
Have opportunities to socialize with other volunteer tourist	4.17	4.36	4.08	0.000
Work side-by-side with other volunteer tourists	4.30	4.31	4.12	0.001
<i>Post-trip Expectations</i>				
Continued contact with your host team	3.22	3.55	3.34	0.000
Continued contact with your fellow volunteer tourists	3.33	3.65	3.47	0.000
Continued contact with local residents of the volunteer tourism site	3.14	3.53	3.27	0.000
Intercultural Expectations				
A language course	2.83	3.07	2.99	0.02
Materials relating to the culture of your destination, cultural expectations	3.90	4.07	3.85	0.000
List of cultural “Do’s & Don’ts”	4.55	4.51	4.25	0.000
Site familiarization (eg. Laws, weather, culture, facilities)	4.49	4.56	4.37	0.000
Work side-by-side with local residents each day	4.05	4.35	4.00	0.000
Share meals with local residents each day	3.82	4.23	3.89	0.000
Play and recreate with local residents	3.83	4.33	3.87	0.000
Have close physical contact with local residents (eg. Caring for small children, comforting the sick and dying)	3.66	4.04	3.42	0.000

*Scale: 1 = Not At All Expected to 5: Fully Expected

CONCLUSION

These results suggest that potential Voluntourists expect to participate in transformative learning opportunities. In contrast, it appears that potential Volunteers and Tourists are not fully prepared to engage in the transformative learning process. It is evident that if transformative learning is to be used to address the negative impacts of volunteer tourism, different learning strategies should be employed based on the type of volunteer tourist. Programs designed for Voluntourists should meet their expectations for all three components of transformative learning; whereas Volunteers and Tourists may require activities that increase their awareness of the benefits of transformative learning in combatting the negative impacts of volunteer tourism. By tailoring the content and promotion of volunteer tourism programs to address these varying expectations, transformative learning may be more effectively employed to reduce the negative impacts of volunteer tourism.

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