

The Phenomenon of Volunteer Tourism within the Tourism Industry



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ABSTRACT: This review analyzes the present status of 'volunteer tourism' as a contemporary phenomenon and field of research. The basis of the review is founded on themes introduced more than a decade ago in "Volunteer Tourism": Experiences That Make a Difference (Wearing, 2001). The article commences by examining the rapid expansion of volunteer tourism in both academic research and practical application. It then scrutinizes the existing literature through a multi-stage framework that mirrors the volunteer tourism procedure. The paper comprehensively analyzes existing research on pre-trip motivations, volunteer tourism experience, and post-trip reflections and transformations. It specifically examines the role of volunteer tourism organizations and the community in facilitating the volunteer tourism experience. The conclusions of the study comprise suggestions for potential avenues of future research.

KEYWORDS: Volunteer tourism, non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), Voluntourism, Tourism decommodification-Volunteer tourism goals, Community-based tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteer tourism is growing rapidly in academic research, worldwide trends, and the popular press, whether you see it as a developing niche, an alternative type of tourism, or an indication of a substantial socio-cultural shift. Volunteer tourism began as an offshoot of the Grand Tour in Britain and Europe, then spread to Australia, the US, and Asia, and Africa (Alexander, 2012; Lo & Lee, 2011). Elliott (2008) revealed that volunteer tourism involvement and study had expanded rapidly during the last 20 years. Another study estimates that since 1990, volunteer tourism has grown significantly, with 1.6 million people worldwide participating in projects and spending between £832 m and £1.3 bn (AUD 1.3 bne2.1 bn) (Tourism Research & Marketing, 2008). Some volunteer tourist groups are large. Between 1971 and 2008, Earthwatch engaged 90,000 volunteers in 1350 projects in 120 countries, providing US\$67 million and 11 million hours of scientific fieldwork (Earthwatch Institute, 2008; Weiler & Richins, 1995).

Volunteer tourism is growing online. On April 17, 2008, a Google search for "volunteer tourism" yielded 230,000 results; four years later, it yielded 4,850,000 results, including published research, volunteer tourism operators and NGOs, and popular press (Voluntourism.org, 2008). Callanan and Thomas (2005) found 698 volunteer tourism items on Go Abroad.com, showing the extent of the business. Volunteer tourism is growing regionally and ethnically (Vrasti, 2013). Such industrial and research expansion requires further investigation.

This thematic analysis will build on Volunteer Tourism: Experiences That Make a Difference, published over 10 years ago (Wearing, 2001). In Volunteer Tourism, Wearing clarified the concept of "alternative tourism" by focusing on volunteers who travel. His findings came from his foundational work in community-based ecotourism (Wearing & Mclean, 1997) and his volunteer-tourism research in the Santa Elena Rainforest, Costa Rica between 1991 and 1994 (Wearing, 1993; Wearing & Larson, 1996; Wearing & Neil, 1997). That study defined volunteer tourism as "those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organization."

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Others have defined this term. Brown (2005) describes volunteer tourism as a "type of tourism experience where a tour operator offers travelers an opportunity to participate in an optional excursion that has a volunteer component, as well as a cultural exchange with local people" (p. 480). Unlike Wearing (2001), the whole trip centered on volunteering. According to McGehee and Santos (2005), volunteer tourism includes discretionary time and takes place outside of the volunteer's normal life.

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Voluntourism, volunteering for development and sustainable tourism have enlarged the definition of volunteer tourism. Clemmons defined voluntourism as “the conscious, seamlessly integrated combination of voluntary service to a destination and the best, traditional elements of travel arts, culture, geography, history and recreation in that destination” (Voluntourism.org).

Volunteer tourism has several meanings and situations within tourism research. Many consider volunteer tourism alternative tourism (Britton & Clarke, 1987; Cohen, 1987, 2003; Deroi, 1981, 1988; Ellis, 2003; Halpenny & Caissie, 2003; Holden, 1984; McGehee, 2002; Pearce, 1980; Singh, 2002, 2004; Sorensen, 1997; Uriely, Reichel, & Ron, 2003; Wearing, 2001, 2003). Some have labeled it new tourism (Poon, 1993), niche tourism (Novelli, 2005), or new moral tourism (Butcher, 2003, 2005). Some writers call volunteer tourism charity, justice, pro-poor, or kindness (Butcher, 2003; Butcher & Smith, 2010; Rogerson, 2011; Scheyvens 2007; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004; Theerapappisit, 2009). Others suggest distinguishing domestic and foreign visitors, volunteer tourists, voluntourists, and tourism volunteers (Benson & Henderson, 2011; Lyons & Wearing, 2012; Smith & Homes, 2009). Tourism scholars are debating and criticizing these definitions and conceptualizations.

This evaluation will concentrate on foreign volunteer tourism, ignore domestic volunteering, and situate it within the alternative tourism viewpoint. International volunteer tourism has increased in response to 1) growing social and environmental issues in developing countries and 2) disasters like the September 11 attacks in the U.S. and the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami in South East Asia. International volunteer tourism serves underprivileged areas via humanitarian and environmental programs. These may include conservation, scientific research (fauna, land, and water), medical aid, economic and social development (agriculture, building, and education), and cultural restoration, according to Wearing (2001). Volunteers may help with mass eye operations or build a rainforest reserve. Callanan and Thomas (2005) observed that most projects lasted fewer than four weeks. Despite the rising popularity of volunteer tourism, formal academic research in this field is still scarce, with much of it emphasizing the demand side. Only lately have host communities been the main focus of study.

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive analysis of volunteer tourism research, considering its level of development within the broader tourism literature. This analysis will be conducted using Jafari's (2001) four research platforms, namely advocacy, cautionary, adaptancy, and scientific platforms. The present study aims to conduct a thorough analysis and evaluation of the existing literature on volunteer tourism, utilizing Clawson and Ketch's (1966) multiphasic structure. The analysis will commence with the pre-trip phase and culminate with the post-trip phase, as suggested by Adler (1981) and Sussman (2000). The authors will commence by examining the existing literature that has focused on the pre-trip motivations of volunteer tourists. Subsequently, they will evaluate the research that has investigated the significance of volunteer tourism organizations. The third section of this component will scrutinize the studies that have centered on the community-oriented approach to volunteer tourism. Lastly, the authors will discuss the research that has explored the potential for transformational experiences in volunteer tourism when the participant returns home. The examination of Jafari's research platforms will be further elaborated upon in each section, accompanied by suggestions for scientifically-grounded platforms in each respective area.

Regarding the acquisition, arrangement, and examination of existing literature, diverse techniques were employed to collect the data for this literature review. The study commenced by conducting database inquiries utilizing the terms "volunteer tourism," "volunteering," "international volunteering," and "voluntourism." The search for articles in this field was conducted using several databases, namely Scopus, CAB direct, Google Scholar, and the Library Catalogues of the universities of both authors. Following the compilation of the initial list of articles, a snowball methodology was employed, wherein the reference lists of each article were scrutinized to obtain supplementary citations for further investigation. The aforementioned procedure was iterated until the point at which no novel articles were unearthed. Due to the swift rate of publication, particularly in the domain of volunteer tourism, it is implausible to compile an all-encompassing list as new articles are being published almost on a daily basis. The study aimed to encompass a diverse range of fields and disciplines, such as tourism, sociology, recreation and leisure, anthropology, geography, political ecology, and economics, in order to achieve maximum inclusivity. Upon collection, the articles underwent assessment for methodological rigor, followed by content analysis and categorization based on the various phases of volunteer tourism as previously mentioned.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESSION OF VOLUNTEER TOURISM OVER TIME

Young (2008) asserts that volunteer tourism is a growing segment of the tourism industry in numerous countries, including both developed and developing nations. Several authors have examined the growth of this form of tourism, including Callanan and Thomas (2005), Raymond and Hall (2008), Söderman and Snead (2008), and Wickens (2010). The industry report titled "Volunteer Travel Insights 2009" by Nestora, Yeung, and Calderon (2009) highlights that although international volunteering has been in existence for several years, it gained significant attention only after the September 11th event and the Indonesian Tsunami. The report notes that travelers began to consider this type of travel and the market became more aware of the opportunities to combine volunteering with a holiday. Over the past 10-15 years, a fortuitous convergence of factors has occurred, including a decrease in travel obstacles, a rise in the middle class within numerous developing nations, and a growing aspiration among this demographic to pursue unconventional travel opportunities. Although there were some articles related to volunteer tourism before the year 2000,

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the majority of research on this topic has been conducted in the past decade. (Broad, 2003; Brown, 2005; Brown & Morrison, 2003; Campbell & Smith, 2006; Clifton & Benson, 2006;

Galley & Clifton, 2004; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003; Holmes & Smith, 2009; Lyons, 2003; Lyons & Wearing, 2008; McGehee & Andereck, 2008; 2009; McGehee & Santos, 2005; McIntosh & Zahra, 2005; Mustonen, 2005; Raymond & Hall, 2008; Singh, 2002, 2004; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004).

After conducting a thorough analysis, it appears that research on volunteer tourism is adhering to the four phases of study that are commonly observed in mainstream tourism, as outlined by Jafari (2001). These phases include advocacy, cautionary, adapting, and scientific platforms. It is noteworthy that, akin to conventional tourism, the evolution of sustainable tourism is not entirely linear. Nevertheless, there appears to be an increasing advancement and refinement in the literature that parallels these stages.

In the beginning, a significant portion of the scholarly inquiry on volunteer tourism adopted an advocacy perspective, which entailed outlining the concept and endorsing it as a desirable pursuit with minimal adverse consequences (Broad, 2003; Broad & Jenkins, 2008; Brown & Morrison, 2003; McGehee, 2002; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004). It is widely acknowledged in the academic literature that volunteer tourists typically seek altruistic experiences that are distinct from those sought by mass tourists. The study revealed various favorable incentives for volunteer tourism, such as self-improvement, cultural awareness, community development, altruism, and contributing to the host community. These findings were reported by several scholars, including Brown (2005), Brown and Morrison (2003), Callanan and Thomas (2005), Coghlan (2008), McIntosh and Zahra (2007), Stoddart and Rogerson (2004), and Wearing and Dean (2003). The authors cited various forms of beneficial volunteer tourism, such as cultural and historical restoration, medical aid, educational assistance, ecological preservation, and environmental contributions. These forms were identified by Coghlan (2008), Cousins (2007), Cousins, Evans, and Sadler (2009a), Gray and Campbell (2007), Rattan, Eagles, and Mair (2012), and Uriely et al. (2003).

Following the initial surge of research centered on advocacy, a variety of analysts and scholars have underscored a more prudent stance that delineates the possible drawbacks and adverse consequences of volunteer tourism. The initial critique was voiced by Brown (2003), followed by subsequent scholarly inquiry by a diverse group of authors including Conran (2011), Guttentag (2009), Palacios (2010), and Sin (2009). Researchers have expressed concerns regarding the possibility of volunteer tourism becoming a new form of colonialism, which could further exacerbate the existing dependency between developed and developing nations. This issue has been highlighted by scholars such as Caton and Santos (2009), Guttentag (2009), and Vrasti (2013). Some scholars have raised concerns regarding the possibility of the host community being exploited (Palacios, 2010; Theerapappisit, 2009). It is noteworthy that the transition from advocacy to cautionary platforms in mainstream tourism took approximately twenty years, whereas, in volunteer tourism, this shift occurred within a decade.

During the mid-to-late 2010s, a shift occurred in the platform of volunteer tourism from advocacy to cautionary. However, during this time, a growing body of research was emerging that aimed to create an adapting platform. This platform consisted of research that prescribed specific methods for developing and maintaining forms of volunteer tourism that maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts. The research was conducted by various scholars, including Benson and Blackman (2011), Broad (2003), Coghlan and Gooch (2011), Ledwith (2005), Sin (2010), Theerapappisit (2009), and Wickens (2010). Broad (2003) conducted a case study on a Gibbon Rehabilitation Center that incorporated volunteer tourism experiences with a strong focus on community involvement. According to Coghlan and Gooch (2011), the utilization of transformative learning can be advantageous for volunteer tourism organizations seeking to augment the transformative capacity of a volunteer tourism encounter. Benson and Blackman (2011) provided a case study based on an island destination, wherein the leadership style of the volunteer tourism organization was determined by the cultural norms of the locale. Despite the instances and illustrations presented, a prevalent criticism among scholars is that although there exists substantial evidence indicating the existence of ideal models of volunteer tourism, the industry as a whole remains far from perfect and necessitates further empirical investigation.

The literature on volunteer tourism has been present since the early days of its study, as evidenced by works such as McGehee (2002), McGehee and Norman (2002), Wearing (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004), Wearing and Neil (2000, 2003), and Weiler and Richins (1995). However, there are indications that the literature is now transitioning into its fourth phase, which is characterized by a scientific platform. The utilization of structured, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, transnational, and mixed-method approaches is required by this platform to systematically and logically examine volunteer tourism.

The phenomenon of volunteer tourism can be comprehensively studied through a variety of methodological approaches, ranging from qualitative case analyses to macro quantitative data. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the breadth and depth of volunteer tourism on a global scale. The formulation of a scientific platform research agenda ought to include both conceptual and empirical research, with a particular emphasis on the propagation of innovative concepts that embody optimal practices in the societal advancement of communities via volunteer tourism.

Furthermore, this methodology must be grounded in a theoretical framework, as demonstrated by the scholarly investigation of volunteer tourism, which is firmly situated within the realm of academia. The text discusses various theories including decommodification and feminist theory (Cousins, Evans, & Sadler, 2009b; Lyons, Hanley, Wearing, & Neil, 2012; Lyons,

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Wearing & Benson, 2009), industrial relations theory (Vrasti, 2013), social movement theory (McGehee, 2012), development theory (Guttentag, 2009), social exchange theory (McGehee & Andereck, 2009), equity theory (Pearce & Coghlan, 2008), critical theory (McGehee, 2012), and neocolonialism (Palacios, 2010).

A research agenda in volunteer tourism that is founded on a scientific platform must establish its parameters, in addition to utilizing appropriate methodological and theoretical approaches. The scope of this study encompasses the examination of the connections between developing and developed nations in the context of volunteer tourism development. This includes analysis of the social, economic, and environmental factors involved, at both local and global levels, across all regions worldwide. The boundaries of this study are broad. The proposed agenda will adopt a social scientific methodology, while also endeavoring to establish connections with various disciplinary domains, both within and outside the social sciences. The expansion and refinement of research parameters are anticipated to facilitate a more comprehensive investigation into the intersection of tourism and volunteering, leading to a more nuanced comprehension and proficient management of this phenomenon.

The endeavor to establish a comprehensive structure for researching volunteer tourism will contribute to the advancement of the field and promote the scientific platform phase.

The subsequent segments will employ the multiphasic methodology, which has been previously expounded upon, to structure the existing literature on volunteer tourism and highlight potential avenues for leveraging the scientific framework in the investigation of volunteer tourism. The present study encompasses an examination of the existing literature on pre-trip motivations, followed by an analysis of research about the volunteer tourism experience. Particular attention is given to the functions of the volunteer tourism organization and the community. The study concludes with a discourse on the literature concerning post-trip reflections and transformations.

3. THE PRE-DEPARTURE INCENTIVES OF THE VOLUNTEER

The research on volunteer tourism includes an in-depth analysis of the motivations behind it, with a focus on whether these motivations differ from those of mainstream tourists. This area of research has been explored by various scholars (Andereck, McGehee, Lee, & Clemmons, 2012; Benson & Seibert, 2009; Brown, 2005; Brumbaugh, 2010; Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Chen & Chen, 2011; Grimm & Needham, 2012a, 2012b; Lo & Lee, 2011; Scheyvens, 2011; Tomazos & Butler, 2010). The discourse surrounding the incentives driving volunteer tourism predominantly revolves around the dichotomy of "self-interest versus altruism" (alternatively referred to as "personal versus interpersonal" by Chen and Chen, 2011), which distinguishes it from conventional tourism. In their work, Callanan and Thomas (2005) present a theoretical model for understanding the motivational factors that drive volunteer tourism. This framework categorizes volunteer tourists into three distinct types, namely shallow, intermediate, and deep volunteer tourists. The classification is based on six primary criteria, including the destination of the project, the duration of the volunteer work, the focus of the experience (whether it is self-serving or altruistic), the qualifications of the volunteer, the level of active versus passive participation, and the extent of contribution to the local community. The authors propose that volunteers who exhibit shallow involvement are primarily motivated by personal interests, which is consistent with the conclusions drawn by Wymer, Self, and Findley (2010) in their study of sensation-seeking volunteer tourists. Conversely, individuals who demonstrate deep involvement tend to prioritize the well-being of the community. The present framework aims to establish a typology of target markets that are catered to by volunteer tourism organizations. NGOs and commercial tourism operators may have divergent preferences when it comes to volunteerism. While the former may prioritize individuals who are intrinsically motivated to engage in volunteer work, the latter may prioritize individuals who are extrinsically motivated. This dichotomy was first identified by Smillie in 1995. Hence, it is recommended to comprehend the incentives behind the volunteer tourist's actions. According to Brown (2005) and Callanan and Thomas (2005), volunteer tourism is typically driven by four primary motivations, namely: (1) cultural immersion, (2) altruism, (3) social bonding, and (4) familial bonding. Seibert and Benson (2009) identified five primary intrinsic motivators for individuals who engage in international travel: (1) the desire to encounter novel and unique experiences, (2) the aspiration to interact with individuals from African cultures, (3) the intention to acquire knowledge about foreign countries and their customs, (4) the inclination to reside in a foreign country, and (5) the objective to expand one's perspective.

The research conducted in this area has sparked a discussion regarding the prevalence of either altruistic or self-interested motivations among volunteer tourists (Coghlan & Fennell, 2009). According to scholarly sources, there are varying perspectives on whether volunteering is an altruistic endeavor. Some researchers argue that it is altruistic (Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Ehrichs, 2000), while others contend that individuals who volunteer can hold a range of positions on the altruism-egotism continuum (Hustinx, 2001:65; Tomazos & Butler, 2010). The former perspective on volunteer tourism seems to be limited in its scope, as it fails to account for the diverse range of experiences and organizations associated with this phenomenon. In contrast, the latter perspective offers a more comprehensive and scientific framework that acknowledges the complex motivations that drive volunteer tourists. Rather than viewing altruism and self-interest as mutually exclusive, it recognizes that individuals engaging in volunteer tourism may be motivated by a combination of factors.

There have been observations made regarding the correlation between demographic variances and the discourse surrounding self-interest versus altruism. According to Lepp (2008) and Wearing, Deville, and Lyons (2008), the segment of the

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volunteer tourism market that comprises younger individuals is more prone to citing self-interest as their primary motivating factor. According to Simpson's (2004) suggestion, the reason behind the majority of individuals engaging in volunteer tourism is due to the fact that they tend to do so during a transitional phase between their academic pursuits and professional endeavors. According to Brown's (2005) research, the age group commonly referred to as "baby boomers" (aged 40-70) is considered a desirable target market by various volunteer tourism organizations (Bakker & Lamoureux, 2008). Contrary to popular belief, this age group does not necessarily have self-centered motives for engaging in volunteer work. Rather than being driven by personal gain, individuals are motivated by cultural immersion, the desire for companionship, the opportunity to contribute to society, and the strengthening of familial relationships (in the case of those with children). In their study on the motives of volunteer tourists from Hong Kong, Lo and Lee (2011) discovered results that were highly similar. These included a desire for cultural immersion and interaction with local individuals, a wish to contribute to society, the opportunity to bond with family members through shared experiences, religious involvement, and a desire to escape from the monotony of everyday life.

In their study, McGehee, Lee, and Clemmons (2009) discovered comparable demographic-based variations in the motivations of potential volunteer tourists, specifically in terms of self-interest and altruism. The participants were classified into three distinct motivational groups, namely the Vanguardists, the Pragmatists, and the Questers. The Vanguardists, a group characterized by their exceptional motivation, were the youngest and smallest among the studied groups. The primary focus of the individuals is on the acquisition of skills (such as self-interest) through volunteer tourism, and they are inclined towards the most demanding volunteer tourism opportunities, both physically and mentally. The Pragmatists constituted the most sizable and intermediate cohort. The primary motivation of the individuals was centered around cultivating a bond with the members of the host community. This inclination was distinct from both self-interest and altruism, and instead reflected a yearning for interpersonal connection. The group denoted as the "Questers" was the third and most ancient among them. The participants exhibited a degree of uncertainty regarding their underlying motivations for engaging in a volunteer tourism program, albeit displaying a slight inclination towards altruistic tendencies.

Some researchers have reported a lack of variation in their findings based on age, and have instead identified similarities across various demographic groups. According to Carter's (2008) research, which involved interviewing a diverse range of volunteer tourists spanning from 17 to 65 years of age, the main driving force behind their participation was the desire to encounter novel experiences and to contribute to the betterment of others. Stoddart and Rogerson (2004) discovered that the predominant incentive among all age cohorts was to provide assistance to those who are less privileged. Subsequently, the individual engaged in activities aimed at enhancing their abilities, fostering interpersonal connections, and exploring new destinations, all of which were driven by self-centered desires.

The present study on the motivations of volunteer tourism substantiates the idea that specialized markets deviate from conventional tourism and undergo modifications with respect to temporal, spatial, and experiential factors (Blackman & Benson, 2010). The observed variation could be attributed to the heightened and more extensive level of engagement between the host and guest, which is intrinsic to the volunteer tourism encounter (Wearing & Grabowski, 2011; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). There are likely variations in the extent of host-guest interactions even within the volunteer tourism sector. Brown (2005) argues that it is necessary to differentiate between types of volunteers, irrespective of their age, who are primarily motivated by vacation rather than volunteering. In such cases, volunteering may only constitute a minor aspect of the trip. Although there is a considerable body of knowledge on the subject of volunteer tourism motivation, there is still ample opportunity to leverage the scientific platform to explore this and other related topics further.

4. ARE YOU CHANGE-MAKERS? THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NON-PROFIT VOLUNTEER TOURISM GROUPS

Research into the groups that make it possible for people to volunteer while on vacation is also significant. Volunteer travel groups are expanding fast in both size and breadth, as was previously indicated. The nonprofit British Trust Conservation Volunteers launched its first initiatives in the 1950s, with volunteer opportunities mostly in the United Kingdom. There was rising awareness about environmental concerns at the time, therefore it was crucial that the focus be on the environment (Holden, 2000; Russo, 1999). As a result, many different groups with a concern for the environment began using trips as a way to get people involved in programs that benefited local communities, the natural world, and scientific endeavors. As a result of volunteer tourism's popularity, many for-profit businesses have entered the industry, a transition that we attribute to commodification (see also Coren & Gray, 2012; Cousins, 2007; Tomazos & Cooper, 2012; Wearing & Wearing, 2006). There has been a dramatic growth in the number of for-profit organizations offering volunteer opportunities, which has altered the nature of the sector as a whole. Despite the lack of available research, for-profit organizations may have a different effect on the community than NGOs do because they are less likely to have a longstanding presence and are more concerned with pleasing their primary customer (the volunteer) than the host community. This idea merits empirical testing, and doing so would be well within the scope of the scientific research framework we've already created.

More studies should take into account that this is not a procedure that is too simple or acute, so the final result caters more to the desires of the target market than to the requirements of the locals who have lived there for generations. As time goes on, even

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the best of intentions might be drowned out by the demands of tourists and the need for profit that drives many businesses (Wearing, McDonald, & Ponting, 2005; Wearing & Ponting, 2006). Therefore, it has been suggested that we need to investigate more effective methods of managing volunteer tourism, an approach that is, of course, still very much in line with the adapting platform strategy of studying volunteer tourism (The International Ecotourism Society, 2012). This agrees with the findings of more traditional tourism studies that stress the importance of competent management of the industries serving the tourism industry (Barbieri, Santos, & Katsube, 2012; Benson & Henderson, 2011; Cousins, 2007; Evans, Campbell, & Stonehouse, 2003; Moutinho, 2000; Murphy & Murphy, 2004; Teare & Hadyn, 1994; Tribe, 2008). Since many larger projects are funded by non-tourism-oriented institutions like the World Bank, which may lack awareness and understanding of the tourism industry, this is perhaps even more important for volunteer tourism; furthermore, much of volunteer tourism is undertaken by volunteers working on small community, environmental, and scientific projects, which are outside the tourism industry (Devereux, 2008). Some of these groups actively reject the notion that they belong in the tourist sector, arguing that they are not as "serious" as the rest of the tourism business (McGehee, 2002).

Tour operators, environmental and humanitarian NGOs, and academic groups all play a role in engaging the volunteer tourist by providing them with opportunities to participate in projects that contribute to community development, scientific research, or ecological and cultural restoration (Brightsmith, Stronza, & Holle, 2008; Wearing, 2004; Wight, 2003). It can be argued that organizations that engage in the operation of volunteer tourism are a key factor in maximizing good practice, even though little research has been conducted on good practices in volunteer tourism and how these maximize potential benefits and reduce potential negative impacts (Ellis, 2003; Jones, 2002; McGehee & Andereck, 2008; Spencer, 2008).

According to the findings of this study, volunteer tourist groups may be seen as either facilitator of neo-colonialism and dependence or agents of constructive social and cultural transformation. Over the last 20 years, studies have focused on several NGOs that have associated themselves with ecotourism to benefit from the money donated by visitors who are thought to be trying to "save the environment" (Brightsmith et al., 2008; Scheyvens, 2002).

Additional research is needed to focus on volunteer tourism organizations that engage in a wider range of programs that support local communities beyond just the environment (Butcher, 2005; Zahra & McGehee, 2013) to truly pursue a scientific platform approach to volunteer tourism. Many of these groups work in tandem with regional nongovernmental organizations. In 2001, Wearing saw the potential of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to alter not just the nature of volunteer tourism but the whole tourist industry.

It's worth noting that there's already a modest but expanding body of work using the scientific platform strategy for this problem. Volunteer tourism organizations of all stripes may learn from what Raymond and Hall (2008) discovered about using appreciative inquiry to improve program development and management in areas including volunteer selection, pre-trip preparation, orientation, and debriefings. Atkins (2012) introduced a novel model for selecting volunteers that makes use of online human-resource psychological assessments in the context of all forms of volunteer tourism. This allows volunteers to be evaluated in advance of their trip, improving the likelihood of a successful pairing of volunteer and activity. McGehee and Andereck (2008) also argued that volunteer tourism groups are vital because they act as intermediaries between volunteer travelers and hosts in community-based initiatives. Volunteer tourist groups, McGehee (2012) argues, may help move the prevailing hegemony away from stereotypes and neo-colonial thinking and toward a more liberated society.

Benson and Blackman (2011) emphasized the need of adopting leadership styles that are compatible with the host culture. Although these initiatives are promising, further empirical study within the scientific platform approach to volunteer tourism is still required.

5. REACHING YOUR GOALS THROUGH A COMMUNITY-BASED STRATEGY

Volunteer tourism comprises three primary stakeholders, namely volunteer tourists and volunteer tourism organizations, which constitute two of the three stakeholders. According to Singh (2002), the host community constitutes the third and arguably the most significant component of the table. The existing body of literature on volunteer tourism has primarily directed its focus away from the host, both as individuals and as a collective community (Holmes, Smith, Lockstone-Binney, & Baum, 2010; Uriely & Reichel, 2000; Uriely et al., 2003). The insufficient attention given to the host may be attributed to the challenge of recognizing and encompassing the complete range of stakeholders that may be categorized as the host and community. The complete involvement and integration of marginalized groups into the community are frequently hindered by power dynamics and socio-economic status, as noted by McGehee and Andereck (2009). Apart from the challenges associated with defining and incorporating all constituents of the community, researchers tend to focus predominantly on tourists of diverse categories for several reasons, as noted by Hall (1994). Tourists present a favorable research population for scholars due to their shared socio-cultural backgrounds. Additionally, tourists may possess greater flexibility to engage in research endeavors, given their discretionary time. Furthermore, research initiatives that target tourists as consumers of the tourism product may benefit from increased funding and support opportunities compared to those that focus on tourism producers. In the context of volunteer tourism, community members may encounter barriers to participation, such as socio-cultural, economic, or linguistic differences. Additionally, hosts may lack awareness of the full range

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of volunteer tourism initiatives taking place within their communities, and may not perceive those who come from outside to assist with programs as "volunteer tourists" (McGehee & Andereck, 2008).

As previously noted in the analysis, initial investigations into volunteer tourism and its impact on the host community were primarily approached from an advocacy standpoint, with an emphasis on the potential benefits of volunteer tourism (Broad, 2003; Clifton & Benson, 2006; Higgins-Desboilles, 2003; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Singh 2002). Singh (2002) conducted an early investigation into the dynamic between hosts and guests in the context of volunteer tourism. The study emphasized the significance of interpersonal connections between individuals from the host communities and volunteer tourists. Broad (2003) conducted a case study utilizing participant observation methodology. The study posited that volunteer tourism has an informal yet significant role in facilitating cultural exchange. The concept of volunteer tourism was presented by HigginsDesboilles (2003) as a prospective avenue for fostering reconciliation between indigenous Australians and Australians of European ancestry. The study conducted by Clifton and Benson (2006) investigated the effects of "research ecotourism" on a Muslim community in Indonesia. The researchers found that the residents of the community were receptive and eager towards the presence of the "research ecotourists". McGehee and Andereck (2009) conducted a quantitative analysis to investigate the attitudes of residents towards volunteer tourism. The study revealed that similar to tourism in general, there exists a positive correlation between residents who have personally benefited from volunteer tourism and their inclination to support additional volunteer tourism activities.

On the other hand, individuals who did not receive direct benefits exhibited less support. Although this research has enhanced our comprehension of volunteer tourism and its impact on the host community, it has not escaped criticism. A second platform of research has emerged, which takes a more cautious approach and focuses on the host community in volunteer tourism. This recent body of literature includes works by Devereux (2008), Guttentag (2009), McGehee and Andereck (2008), Palacios (2010), Raymond and Hall (2008), Simpson (2004), and Sin (2009).

According to Guttentag's (2009) assertion, numerous volunteer tourism initiatives arranged by Western countries exert an adverse influence on the progress of tourism in the communities that host them. Volunteer tourism expeditions have the potential to create a dependency on sending organizations among host communities, which can compromise the dignity of local residents, surpass the community's carrying capacity if not effectively managed, and hinder the tourism development needs of host communities. The incongruity between host communities and sending organizations may lead to tension between volunteer tourists and host communities. According to Raymond and Hall (2008), there is a belief that volunteer tourism is rooted in a commodified setting and functions as a bastion for those who are privileged. The study conducted by Simpson (2004) centered on the subject of power. The author employed development theory to underscore the potential hazards of excessive dependence on volunteer tourism as a solution for global development. The argument put forth is that the reliance on GAP year volunteers who lack proper training and possess a Western-centric view towards development may pose a threat to the extensive efforts made by established NGOs and self-sufficient communities. Although the author's research primarily centered on GAP year participants, who possess unique characteristics compared to other types of volunteer tourists, her thesis remains applicable. Palacios (2010) presented additional evidence to bolster this claim by utilizing the concept of neocolonialism to caution that global volunteer and service initiatives must actively participate in the development aid conversation and acknowledge the obstacles associated with volunteer tourism. Tomazos and Butler (2010) have recently drawn attention to the adverse effects that volunteer tourists have had on a child refuge located in Baja California, Mexico.

The concept of adaptancy, which constitutes the third platform, is evident in research on volunteer tourism that prioritizes host community engagement. This approach emphasizes the importance of volunteer tourism initiatives being relevant to the local community and taking into consideration the potential positive and negative effects. The significance of a community-centred approach has been highlighted by Wearing (2001) in his earlier work and has been further advocated by him in subsequent studies (Ponting, McDonald, & Wearing, 2005; Wearing & Wearing, 1999). The primary contention posits that embracing conventional tourism models, which rely on commodified agendas, as the optimal approach for volunteer tourism will persist in both theoretical and practical domains. Tourism, within the context of a purportedly free market economy, can be viewed as the monetization of the human desire to journey, whereby natural and cultural assets are utilized as a means to generate financial gain. The market is primarily driven by the demand for such experiences, which often results in the exclusion of the destination community from the process. Neoliberal tourism models often lead to limited contributions to local communities in developing countries, as a result of high rates of imports, profit repatriation, high levels of expatriate management staffing, and investment incentive schemes. This not only prevents tourists and destination communities from interacting on an equal footing but also hinders their ability to do so, as evidenced by various studies (Crossley, 2012; Meyer, 2007; Prins & Webster, 2010; Schilcher, 2007). The potential for the scientific platform of volunteer tourism to be extended in this region is worth considering, as elaborated in the subsequent paragraphs.

One of the core principles of volunteer tourism is to aid in the development of economically disadvantaged nations. The findings of research indicate that the rigid adherence to economic neoliberalism poses a threat to tourism. This approach hinders the exploration and implementation of alternative tourism models, and undermines the careful government regulation and control that enabled affluent nations to achieve prosperity initially. (Chang, 2008). The concept of volunteer tourism holds promise in terms of steering clear of commodified and neoliberal tourism and research approaches, and instead paving the way for an alternative

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paradigm of practice and analysis. However, it may encounter difficulties in garnering community participation, particularly when the associated expenses are deemed excessive.

The prospect of a decommodified agenda has motivated certain researchers to prioritize empowering destination communities, as evidenced by the research agendas of Wearing and Ponting (2006). However, others have contested the idea that volunteer tourism can be considered truly decommodified, as argued by Gray and Campbell (2007), and have questioned the merits of a decommodified research agenda, as posited by Butcher (2006, 2011). According to Wearing and Wearing (2006), it is imperative to shift away from the dominating tourist approach, which results in restricted involvement of destination communities. In order to explicate the phenomenon, one can refer to the investigation conducted by Gray and Campbell (2007). Their analysis of a volunteer tourism venture that did not succeed in providing a decommodified experience serves as an illustration of what Callanan and Thomas (2005) refer to as "shallow volunteer tourism". The aforementioned refers to a travel plan that is adaptable and of brief duration, determined by the travelers in an environment where the primary motivation and consequent gratification are centered around the destination and the assurance of encountering particular wildlife species (Gray & Campbell, 2007). To enhance the lucidity of the discourse, we propose that while this approach oversimplifies the intricate nature of volunteer tourism, this continuum offers a vantage point that illuminates how several instances of superficial volunteer tourism encounters can be construed as a variant of commodified tourism (with the tourist in a position of dominance). The volunteer tourism products described by Callanan and Thomas are perceived as a manifestation of opposition to the neoliberal models of tourism. As a result of its location situated away from the tourist hub and instead prioritizing the community, a framework of profound volunteer tourism can be adopted, providing avenues for the enhancement of the destination community's agency. The discourse pertaining to this matter is evident in Butcher's (2006) contentions against a research agenda that is decommodified, as well as in the work of Wearing and Ponting (2006), who assert that Butcher oversimplified the concept of decommodification and erroneously equated it with being anti-development. It is probable that these debates will persist, indicating a thriving and vigorous domain of inquiry.

Apart from the discourse surrounding commodification and decommodification, scholarly investigations have uncovered intricate interconnections between hosts and guests. The involvement of non-governmental organizations in volunteer tourism offers an opportunity to redefine the cultural environment of a particular destination, and consequently, the dynamics of the relationship between the host community and the visiting volunteers (Gustafson, 2001; Meethan, 2001). By acknowledging the perspectives of destination communities, it becomes possible to develop alternative tourism programs and counter dominant forms of interaction. The concept of otherness, as applied in this framework, encompasses differentiation without subordination or the imposition of a fixed identity. It facilitates a dynamic and collaborative interaction among the tourist, host community, and volunteer tourism organization, potentially yielding advantages for all parties involved. The exhibition of touristic identities has the potential to facilitate a cultural and experiential mechanism of engagement and interchange between visitors and local populations. The present study aims to challenge the dominance of Western countries in the tourist experience. Drawing on de Certeau's (1988) arguments on experiential resistance, the study seeks to destabilize the balance of knowledge-power and resist in favor of the cultural uniqueness of host communities. According to Wearing's (2001) research, volunteer tourism has the potential to facilitate the development of social value and identities within the cultural context of the host community through increased experiential interaction. Social value is generated through the incorporation of cultural Third Spaces that involve hosts, guests, and intermediaries, which are determined through community consultation, policy decision-making, and other forms of participation opportunities. The aforementioned approach facilitates the deconstruction of the self-other binary, which is characterized by a dominant-subordinate relationship. Additionally, it allows for ample flexibility in the portrayal of the host identity, thereby enabling an exploration of a Third Space that encompasses the hybrid selves of all involved parties. This perspective has been espoused by scholars such as Higgins-Desbiolles (2006; 2009), Wearing (2001), and Zahra & McGehee (2013). The manner in which individuals access and encounter various cultural realms is impacted by the socially constructed concept of otherness within the context of tourism. Additionally, the resistance and subversion of host cultures towards this structured coding, as well as the counter-discourses to the gaze and surveillance of power, also play a role in shaping these experiences. Zahra and McGehee (2013) provide an illustration of Third Spaces in their investigation of volunteer tourism in the Philippines. The study reveals that volunteer tourists, hosts, and the organizing non-governmental organization (NGO) collaborated to resist political leaders. There may be an opportunity to conduct additional research on this phenomenon by employing social capital theory, specifically by incorporating the notions of bridging and bonding social capital as outlined by Flora (2004) and Jones (2005).

Studies conducted on the subjects of commodification/decommodification and host-guest relations frequently culminate in proposals for further investigation into the function of policy and governance in volunteer tourism, as suggested by McGehee (2012) and Wearing et al. (2005). This subject matter has garnered a certain degree of consideration; however, it warrants further examination. It is imperative to analyze instances of public ethics that are initiated by regional administration, regional economies, and native self-governance executed by the receiving communities (Wearing et al., 2005; Wearing & Ponting, 2006). The disclosure of various tactics that can establish a renewed social morality of affiliation within minority and marginalized communities across developed and developing countries could potentially reform and regulate the extensively commercialized and standardizing character of the present Western tourism that dominates globally (Lyons et al., 2012). The field of study pertaining to the subject

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matter undoubtedly presents ample scope for further scientific investigation, particularly in light of the advent of the newly established 'International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators' by The International Ecotourism Society.

6. RETURNING HOME: A TIME FOR INTROSPECTION AND GROWTH

As demonstrated by the preceding discourse, scholarly investigations on volunteer tourism have encompassed a wide spectrum of subjects. An area that seems to have received limited scholarly attention is the post-trip impact of the volunteer tourism experience. Several scholars have delved into this field of study, including Alexander (2009), Bailey and Russell (2010), Broad (2003), Christofi and Thompson (2007), Coghlan and Gooch (2011), Grabowski and Wearing (2011), Lepp (2008), McGehee (2002), McGehee and Santos (2005), and Zahra (2011). Nevertheless, there remains ample opportunity for further investigation.

Previous research with an advocacy focus has indicated that engagement in volunteer tourism has the potential to modify behaviors after returning to one's home environment. This is attributed to the establishment of networks as well as the consciousness-raising aspect of the experience (McGehee, 2002; McGehee & Norman, 2002; McGehee & Santos, 2005). The participants exhibited changes in their decision-making processes regarding purchases, level of engagement in domestic social movement organizations, and interpersonal dynamics with acquaintances, colleagues, and loved ones. Bailey and Russell (2010) conducted a study which revealed that college participants who engaged in volunteer tourism experienced immediate positive effects on their openness, civic attitudes, and wisdom.

Although the study did not have a specific focus on post-trip change, Broad's (2003:63) research indicates that volunteers were able to surpass the limited and superficial interactions that are often associated with travel. This led to personal development and a shift in their perspective of the world. This outcome was attributed to the active involvement of volunteers in the community's daily affairs and their interaction with the indigenous populace. Lepp's (2008) research demonstrated that a significant result of the experience was an improved sense of self, as a result of increased personal introspection. The emergence of self has been identified as a noteworthy result in various other investigations (Matthews, 2008; Sin, 2009; Wearing, 2002).

Grabowski and Wearing (2011) and Alexander (2009) have examined the concept of post-travel change in volunteer tourists from a psychological standpoint. Based on their initial investigation, the researchers found that the act of volunteering as a tourist led to notable transformations in the individual's disposition, particularly in the areas of reliance, creative inclination, and self-assurance. Zahra (2011; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007) employed a longitudinal approach to investigate the possibility of volunteer tourism as a transformative or revelatory encounter. The research participants engaged in reflection regarding the enduring impact of their experience on their daily lives, even after a period of eight years had elapsed. Although there have been some analyses conducted on the effects within a limited timeframe (Bailey & Russell, 2010), Zahra's research is the sole investigation that has examined the long-term implications up to this point.

Certain studies have indicated that the process of readjusting to one's home environment may pose challenges for individuals who engage in volunteer tourism. According to Grabowski and Wearing's (2011) research, the phenomenon of re-entry experienced by volunteer tourists can be characterized as "deculturation." This involves the individual being caught in a state of limbo between two distinct cultural environments, namely the host country and their country of origin (Kagitçibasi, 1987). The assertions made by McGehee and Santos (2005) were similar to those of other researchers. Their study involved conducting focus groups with participants from various volunteer tourism organizations throughout the United States. The study's participants reported challenges in reintegrating into their regular routines without acknowledging their volunteer tourism experience. They frequently encountered emotions of seclusion when they lacked interaction with fellow volunteers who shared similar experiences. According to Gudykunst and Kim (2003, p. 359), the phenomenon of deculturation that arises from participating in volunteer tourism refers to the process of relinquishing old cultural practices, while adaptation is the outcome of the dynamic interaction between acculturation and deculturation. According to Coghlan and Gooch (2011), the utilization of the transformative learning concept is advocated as a feasible approach for volunteer tourism entities to enhance the caliber of the transformative process. This entails sustained engagement with volunteers following their return to their respective domestic settings. However, disparate findings have been reported by some researchers in this particular field.

The absence of deculturation among returned missionaries was observed by Callanan (2010), who noted that their re-entry did not pose significant challenges in terms of readapting to their native culture. There exist several potential justifications for these perplexing findings.

According to Mitchell's (2006) observations, advancements in information technologies and social media have resulted in a distinct re-entry experience that differs from that of two decades ago. According to Sink (2011), volunteer tourists have the opportunity to maintain communication with the communities that provided them with hospitality, as well as with their fellow volunteers, through social media platforms such as Facebook. This could potentially be the underlying factor contributing to the disparity observed in the outcomes. According to certain research, the authenticity of a traveler's experience is not solely determined by the tangible events that occur at the destination. Rather, it is often associated with the effect that the tourism encounter has on the individual's self, which is frequently linked to the recollection of the experience through mediums such as film, photography, and travel literature (Wearing et al., 2010:15). Volunteer tourism engenders a culturally rich experience by fostering extensive

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intercultural engagement with the host community. This experience is subsequently reinforced through recollection and sustained interaction via social media upon returning home.

According to Ledwith's (2005) proposition, individuals recount and revise their life narratives in varying ways depending on their audience, memory, and perception. Consequently, stories are influenced by temporal and spatial factors as well as comprehension, and the act of storytelling can serve as a means of expressing one's consciousness. (2005, p. 257).

Prior to delving into the conclusions, it is imperative to acknowledge a conspicuous void in this particular domain of inquiry, namely the dearth of investigation into the post-trip alterations and metamorphosis experienced by members of the host community.

The literature reveals two studies that have examined the phenomenon of NGO-operated, non-commercialized, volunteer tourism programs. Despite their imperfections, these programs have been found to facilitate Third Spaces, which generate a favorable post-experience "buzz" for the community. (McIntosh & Zahra, 2008; Zahra & McGehee, 2013). The study conducted by McIntosh and Zahra (2008) revealed that Maori youth expressed a sense of possibility and probability in completing their education after engaging in numerous conversations with volunteer tourists. Similarly, Filipino residents reported increased confidence and persistence in their interactions with local government as a result of assistance from volunteer tourists. This included advocating for their rightful trash services and motivating young individuals to maintain community playgrounds and parks.

7. CONCLUSION

As noted in the preceding review, the examination of volunteer tourism is currently at a pivotal juncture with significant potential for advancement. The literature presents several debates regarding volunteer tourism, such as its fluid and multiple locations across the four research platforms identified by Jafari (2001), the expansion of its theoretical foundations, the debate between self-interest and altruism, the role of volunteer tourism organizations as agents of change or a new form of commodification, the potential for volunteer tourism to shift the tourism paradigm towards community-centered practices, and the transformative potential of post-trip volunteer tourists. The various debates and discussions surrounding volunteer tourism can be categorized as a meta-debate concerning the position of volunteer tourism within the broader spectrum of tourism.

Does this represent a new form of sustainable tourism or is it simply a minor addition to the tourism industry? Alternatively, could it signify a significant shift in the paradigm as a completely decommodified form of tourism? All of these topics are stimulating areas of discourse and investigation.

The categorization of volunteer tourism as a component of sustainable tourism has been subject to scrutiny by certain scholars (Rees, 1990) who advise exercising prudence, as it may eventually become subsumed within the conventional neo-liberal agenda that is integral to the perpetuation of economic expansion. According to Butcher (2011), there is a possibility that it may transform into a type of tourism that is centered on charity or welfare. The optimal solution may lie within the spectrum of these two endpoints. In order for volunteer tourism to achieve success, it is imperative that it maintains sustainability with regards to both the social and natural environments of the destination. Additionally, it must not devolve into a form of tourism that primarily capitalizes on the commodification of ostensibly altruistic motivations. By utilizing Jafari's (2001) fourth stage of study, which is the scientific platform, the examination of volunteer tourism can be approached. This approach will aid in determining the position of volunteer tourism and its potential future developments.

The advancement of volunteer tourism in the future necessitates the acknowledgement of the requirement for supplementary theoretical inputs. As previously stated, there has been notable progress in this field, as evidenced by the works of Alexander and Bakir (2011), Lee and Woosnam (2010), Lyons et al. (2012), McGehee (2002, 2012), and Woosnam and Lee (2011). These studies have employed various theoretical frameworks, such as critical theory, conflict theory, social movement theory, community capitals theory, development theory, and interactionist theory, among others. However, there remains significant potential for further investigation. The psychology and sociology literatures offer valuable insights, and there is potential for further exploration in the theories of political science, anthropology, geography, political ecology, and economics.

Theoretical frameworks can significantly enhance the credibility of arguments pertaining to the discourse on self-interest versus altruism in psychology, the role of volunteer tourism organizations as catalysts for change in sociology and anthropology, the geographical aspects of compassion in geography, the potential of volunteer tourism to establish a novel tourism paradigm that prioritizes community welfare in sociology, political science, economics, and political ecology, and the transformative capacity of post-trip volunteer tourists in psychology and sociology.

The domain of volunteer tourism research is extensive and possesses significant potential. However, certain subjects are currently of particular relevance.

Several of these domains have been subject to investigation, yet there exists potential for further expansion. The establishment of standards and qualifications for effective practices in volunteer tourism is currently attracting attention. The implementation of evaluation mechanisms that facilitate the examination of potential achievements and offer insights into the probable outcomes of volunteer tourism projects is expected to play a significant role in the future. The subject matter of volunteer tourism and mobility exhibits significant potential in various domains, such as the grey nomad trend (Leonard & Onyx, 2009). Its distinctiveness in fostering global communities across socio-economic, cultural, and physical terrains warrants additional investigation. The

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investigation of volunteer tourism in conjunction with other types of non-commercialized tourism, such as couch surfing (Moltz & Gibson, 2007), backpacker tourism (Oii & Laing, 2010), and wwoofing (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006), represents a highly innovative field of study. Additionally, the relatively unexplored realm of social media and volunteer tourism (Atkins, 2012; Grimm & Needham, 2012b; Sink, 2011) is an area of great potential interest. The emergence of novel social media platforms has enabled travelers to create their own travel experiences without relying on travel agents or other intermediaries in the tourism industry. This trend has the potential to revive the era of the self-sufficient backpacker. Simultaneously, the inclination towards pre-arranged and comprehensive experiences has resulted in the emergence of commercial service providers, such as travel services, who have responded to the need for varied volunteer tourism opportunities. The extent to which social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, will steer volunteer tourists towards self-organized volunteer tourism opportunities and less commercialized forms provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) remains uncertain (Grimm & Needham, 2012a). The potential impact of demand-generated content on the volunteer tourism sector remains uncertain. Furthermore, within the realm of conventional tourism, there has been a notable level of attention given to the domain of community welfare and standard of living. However, there has been a dearth of focus on volunteer tourism in this regard. This prompts the need for further research on the correlation between volunteer tourism and the establishment and amplification of social capital.

The discourse surrounding the potential contributions of volunteer tourism to the tourism sector and society at large remains a subject of debate, necessitating the need for thorough and empirical research conducted on a scientific foundation. It is recommended that future research prioritize the investigation of volunteer tourism forms that warrant support, alongside the discourse on strategies to optimize the favorable outcomes and mitigate the adverse effects for all stakeholders. Nonetheless, the aforementioned matter is insignificant when compared to the broader research inquiry concerning the impact of volunteer tourism on the civil society. It is anticipated that in due course, the aforementioned discussions will be settled, and the distinctive capacity of volunteer tourism to generate an authentic and non-commercialized human encounter will be emphasized.

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