Article

Empowering the Community or Escape Daily Routine—A Voluntourism Perspective

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Abstract: On the edges of tourism, volunteering, and travel, we find voluntourism with tourists, mainly from high-income countries, looking for an alternative form of travel that promises sustainable development of destinations. The aim of the paper is to explore voluntourism through motivations and impacts, as well as aggregate different volunteers in categories, in order to better understand this phenomenon. The results of a questionnaire answered by 65 international volunteers show seven motivations and a lack of attention on the local projects. More than half of the volunteers are considered to have short participations in projects, considering the destination as a very important aspect, have minimal skills, and have a passive participation, as a minimal direct contribution. Generically, our research may help to highlight and boost the voluntourism experience, creating positive and transformative changes.

Keywords: voluntourism; international volunteers; non-profit organizations; motivations; impacts

1. Introduction

Volunteer tourism, also acknowledged as voluntourism, is a form of travel that allows collaboration among travellers/tourists/volunteers and several stakeholders in several different ways, with the main objective to fulfill the needs of a local community [1]. Fundamentally, people choose to do voluntary work while travelling, and in various European countries, there has been an increase in the number of programs and support packages available for young volunteers, since volunteer tourism is particularly popular with students [2], especially the ones who want to take a gap year [3]. The idea of volunteer tourism is linked with meaningful experiences, immersive opportunities, and the possibility of help a specific community [4], so it is no wonder that travellers look for a dynamic alternative travel option that considers voluntourism as an important option [5].

However, voluntourism has been the target of some substantial criticism over the last few years, mainly because the increasing commercialization inherent to voluntourism programs [6]. These programs might create some pressure to the sustainability of this model and to the long-term optimistic results for both the host community and the volunteers [7]. At the same time, the impacts of tourism on a community are not extensively understood [4], and some negative impacts, like increase in prices of goods or services, crowding, congestion, and an increase of undesirable activities (e.g., gambling, prostitution), where identified in some studies [4–8]. Thus, organizations must find methods and techniques to recruit and involve volunteers that are devoted to sustainable and lasting practices [9], in order to increase the positive impact of these programs.

Our research reflects on the dual elements of voluntourism, considering its potential positive impacts and its growing critiques. Therefore, we analyze and describe (i) the motivations of volunteers and what drives them to venture into these kinds of actions, as

well as the impacts on them and in the host community; and (ii) aggregate volunteers in different categories in order to better understand this group of people. This is a contribution to better understand the human capital of the volunteers and their experience, as well as the hosts contributing to a continuous improvement of the field, minimizing negative impacts while maximizing their benefits.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Voluntourism—Motivations

Motivation is a derivation of the word movement and is absolutely fundamental to study it in order to predict, understand and influence a person´s behavior, particularly in an organizational context [10]. Motivation is the process that begins, guides, and sustains goal-oriented behaviors [11]. To comprehend what defines whether or not ongoing relationships are prosperous, there is a need to develop insights into individuals' motives [12]. Industries with such a substantial dependence on volunteer workforces, such as the tourism industry, need to recognise this link between understanding the motivation of volunteers and the need to act to attract and maintain their motivation [13].

There are some variables that can influence volunteer experiences, like length of stay, project type, age, or gender [2,14–16]. As an illustration, we generally see female as occasional international volunteers [17], with less than 35 years [18–20] and with several different types of motivations.

In recent years, travel to developed and developing countries for reasons related to volunteering has been growing [21–23], and the most important reasons are related with performing charity work [24], offer medical services to underprivileged communities [25], work on educational programs [26], support wildlife conservation [14], offer help to reconstruct disaster areas and religious based actions [16]. It is not unusual to find international volunteers that refer the interest in visit touristic attractions within the country they are visiting or taking part in different touristic activities during their free time [27], and so this has led to voluntourism being acknowledged as an unconventional and alternative form of tourism [28,29].

It is fundamental, for organizations, to understand the reasons why individuals decide to volunteer in specific programmes and destinations, so the literature presents some considerations about the most suitable way of organizing motivations [3,9,30–32], and thus, we summarize several international volunteers motivations in Table 1.

Table 1. International Volunteer Motivations.

	Motivations	Authors
Self-Interest	Opportunity to gain work-related experience	[26,33]
	To respond to their needs or skills	[33]
	Travel	[7,34]
	Escape from everyday life	[7]
	Celebrities instigation	[34]
	Self-discover	[30,34]
Human Connection	Seeking camaraderie	[7]
	Cultural immersion	[7,26,30,34]
Altruistic	Helping Others	[26,30,33]
	Making a difference to other	[34]

Source: [32].

In the literature, we also found a theoretical framework that considers three different types of international volunteers (shallow, intermediate, and deep volunteer tourists) grounded 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 [35]. We could consider that a shallow volunteer has a preference to choose the project according to the destination instead of choosing the more appropriate program according to his skills and abilities, focus mostly on himself and on self-interest motivations, stay for short terms on the projects, one or two weeks, has a more passive participation because to help the host community is not their main goal which of course leads to low levels of contribution; an intermediate volunteer could have both kind of motivations, because, as according to the authors' explanation, self-interest and altruistic motivations are not entirely mutually exclusive [36], their length of stay is longer, they have a tendency to have a more active participation which will rise their contribution to the host community; and a deep volunteer has a more altruistic view, thinking about the others and the project itself first, stays for long-term experiences, from six months to one year, which leads to very high participation and contribution to the host community.

2.2. Voluntourism—Benefits for Whom?

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 and communities, and to volunteers (and their communities of origin): as a promising act of peaceful cultural exchange, facilitating productive dialogue, and experience across boundaries and, in the process, bridging cultures in ways that can enhance future cross-national engagement [37,38]. Considering the volunteer point of view, 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, as well as a more civic and global engagement.

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 [28]. 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 [26,39].

The outcomes considered can be either negative or positive and depend on several factors, like the project, the host community or the volunteer himself and his/her expectations. Many organizations find lots of difficulties with some communities, and sometimes we have communities that are not available to work with organizations [40]. Furthermore, managing volunteer expectations is very important, because high expectations can create a detrimental impact on the experience causing volunteers disengagement with the hosts and to struggle more in their on-site experience [41,42]. Sending organizations can play a central role in facilitating the achievement of such objectives, matching the volunteers with the project accordingly to their abilities and warning and advising them about what they could encounter on their destination [43].

Volunteer tourism may have the potential to produce negative impacts on the individuals and communities involved as well [44], such as the neglect of locals' desires and customs, lack of skilled volunteers, a hindering of work progress and completion of unsatisfactory work, a disruption of local economies, a reinforcement of conceptualizations of the 'other' and rationalizations of poverty, and an instigation of cultural changes [45]. A problem emerges when tourists' desires may be considered before the needs and desires of host communities [44]. 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 [35,46], this may not only impede work progress as may actually perform unsatisfactory work. Just because a community is hosting a volunteer tourism project, we cannot assume that the community will inevitably benefit from it, either economically or in other dimensions. In fact, the presence of volunteer labourers may have the opposite effect and may actually negatively

impact labour demand or promote dependency [44]. For example, in Cambodia, there is a lot of concerns with orphanage tourism, especially with visitors' donations, that may be creating dependency, what may be unsustainable [47]. 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 [44].

Some authors [26,48] argue that, instead of challenging hegemonic worldviews and colonial patterns, international volunteering and service actually perpetuates and reinforces the 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.

Besides the influence on the local economy, several positive impacts that are mentioned by respondents are of a social nature, such as the strengthening of the community, enhancing education, or improving the quality of life of residents [40]. Volunteer tourism also allows for relatively stronger personal connections and intimacy between volunteers and the locals and sown the seeds for future contacts and co-operations, which could point to longer-term and more sustainable development in host communities [49].

3. Methodology

We used the LimeSurvey software to create a questionnaire, refined from previous studies [41,50], and subdivided it in three categories. The first one with the characterization of the volunteer with questions such age, gender, type of occupation, number of times or days in which he/she had volunteer abroad; a second part with the motivations, where the volunteers were asked to evaluate the 36 motivations found on the literature, from 1 to 5 according to their relevance for taking that kind of experience; the last category asked about the impacts of the volunteer programs on the individual and the hosts communities where they were informed to use the same evaluation.

The questionnaire was shared via social media and a large variety of different Portuguese associations well known such as: AMI, Para Onde, Voluntiir, Rota Jovem, Cruz Vermelha, Médicos do Mundo. All this non-profit organizations were contacted via mail and telephone in order to share the questionnaire with all their international volunteers. Some youth houses were also contacted and also visited so a more personal approach could encourage sharing. Some volunteers were personally contacted and asked to share the questionnaire with others volunteers, through their personal pages and social media groups.

A total of 65 answers were completed and assumed as valid for this study. Of the 65 volunteers, 49 were female equivalent to 75% of the sample, 43 volunteers were between the ages of 18 and 30 years, 19 between 31 and 40 years, and 3 in the gaps between 41 and 50 years, which can be considered a young sample. The volunteer's main occupational area was health, where 22 of the total participants had volunteer in something regarding the health benefits for the host communities and 11 volunteers connected with education. Those 2 areas are equivalent to more than 50% of the total number of volunteers and it may be due to deficiencies of the countries where the volunteers are more needed, that have poor health and education levels and could be accounted for the lack of investment on these services aligned with issues like increasing birth rates, increase of refugees due to diseases or conflicts or a deficit of professional skilled and experienced individuals in such countries [35]. Taking in consideration their salary, our study reveals that volunteers with high income salary have less tendency to go on international missions.

According to our data, although almost 65% of the volunteers only took one voluntary mission in the last 5 years, the same cumulative percentage volunteer for more than 30 days on a mission, and 31% for even more than 6 months in the last 5 years, The longer the time devoted to a project, the more likely altruistic reasons has come into play and understandably a greater contribution will be set to the communities [35]. Taking in consideration that over 60% of the volunteers have a dependent work, which normally

conditions their free time and hinders the opportunity to volunteer for long duration periods, our sample have an important number of high duration volunteers. All these numbers are presented on the Table 2.

Table 2. Volunteers Characterization.

Respondents Characteristics (n = 65)		n	Percentage
Gender	Female	49	75.4
	Male	16	24.6
Age	18–30	43	66.2
	31–40	19	29.2
	41–50	3	4.6
Occupational area	Health	22	33.9
	Education	11	16.9
	Technic	13	20
	Religious	1	1.5
	Social	7	10.8
	Business Management	6	9.2
	Other	5	7.7
Type of employment	Student	14	21.5
	Dependent Worker	40	61.5
	Independent worker	4	6.2
	Other	7	10.8
Monthly salary	0–600€	17	26.2
	601–900€	20	30.8
	901–1450€	15	23.1
	1451–1800€	5	7.7
	1801–2600€	3	4.6
	+2600€	5	7.7
Number of voluntary missions in the last 5 years	1	42	64.6
	2	14	21.5
	3	3	4.6
	4	2	3.1
	5	2	3.1
	+5	2	3.1
Number of days on voluntary missions in the last 5 years	1 to 7	7	10.8
	8 to 15	2	3.1
	16 to 22	4	6.2
	23 to 30	10	15.4
	31 to 60	11	16.9
	61 to 180	11	16.9
	+180	20	30.8

Using SPSS, motivations for participating in volunteer tourism were subjected to Principal Components Factor analysis using Varimax rotation in order to assess the underlying structure of volunteer tourism motivations.

4. Results

From all the motivations, only "to learn new things", "to meet the locals", "to develop my skills and abilities", and "to help the others" did not gather any evaluation of 1, and the last one not even a 2. This concludes that all the volunteers thought that by taking this opportunity, they could somehow benefit. The items with the highest values are "to help the others" and "to learn new things" with, 4.69 and 4.54, respectively, were their main reasons. On the other hand, "to imitate a celebrity", was not a priority at all, this motivation had a mean of 1.05, being the lowest and together with "to strengthen my friends' relationships" (1.77) and "strengthen my family relationships" (1.57) were the

only ones with a mean ≤2, this can be a way of showing that volunteers often take such initiatives on their own and to find themselves. Six motivations showed a more balanced percentage, like "to develop my personal career", "to develop my personal interests", "to escape the daily routines", "to develop my knowledge of the destination", "to experience peace", "to be adventurous".

4.1. Factor Analisys

The exploratory factor analysis created seven motivation factors, as can be seen in Table 3, explaining a total of 67.6% of the sample. The overall value of the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test (KMO) was 0.711 with a significance level of 0.000 in Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which are acceptable values [51,52].

Table 3. Rotated Component Matrix, Factor Results.

Factor Names	Motivations	Component Value	Cronbach Alfa
Cultural Curiosity	to be with people from different cultures	0.864	0.856 good
	to meet the locals	0.744	
	to learn new things	0.742	
	to become immersed in the host community's culture	0.686	
	to do something new and different	0.648	
Escape	to be close to nature	0.767	0.845 good
	to be away from everyday stress	0.754	
	to escape the daily routine	0.767	
	to have a good time	0.623	
	to travel	0.589	
	to develop my personal career	0.423	
Personal challenge	to think about personal values	0.779	0.807 good
	to learn about other people	0.663	
	to experience the challenge of a task	0.624	
	to develop my skills and abilities	0.539	
	to find myself	0.486	
	to develop my knowledge of the destination	0.460	
Accomplishment	to take part in a rare opportunity	0.747	0.764 reasonable
	to view the scenery	0.709	
	to fulfil a dream	0.610	
	to develop my personal interests	0.523	
Independency	to work with an organization whose mission I support	−0.692	0.629 weak
	to be independent	0.651	
	to combine a love of travel with a desire to give back	0.604	
	to be adventurous	0.522	
Altruism	to do something meaningful	0.807	0.696 weak
	to help others	0.822	
	to make a difference	0.726	
	to experience peace	0.467	
	to get a sense of achievement	0.466	
Relationship	to strengthen my friends relationship	0.836	0.735 reasonable
	to have an opportunity to educate my children	0.688	
	to strengthen my family relationship	0.595	
	to develop a relationship with other volunteer tourists	0.553	

4.2. Impacts of the Volunteer Programs

On this category the volunteers were asked to evaluate each of the impact, regarding the volunteer program that they worked with and their feelings and sensations at the end of the experience, from 1 to 5, being 1 not relevant, and 5 very relevant.

On the volunteer programs questions, and regarding their impacts on the volunteers, many of the respondents had positively feelings. As we can observe on Tables 4 and 5,

only a growth of my personal career did not get a mean higher than 4, which means that the volunteer programs had a relevant impact on all the other variables regarding the volunteer's experience.

Table 4. Volunteer programs impacts on the volunteers.

Impacts	Mean	Min	Max
A growth of my skills and work experience	4.22	1	5
A growth of my personal development	4.68	3	5
A growth of my intercultural competences and language skills	4.49	3	5
A greater knowledge and international understanding	4.55	2	5
A transformative experience	4.52	2	5
A greater civic and global engagement	4.60	2	5
A growth of my professional career	3.28	1	5

Table 5. Volunteer Program Impacts on the host communities.

Impacts	Mean	Min	Max
A growth of the social. economic. environmental and political conditions of the communities.	3.11	1	5
A growth of the knowledge. skills and intercultural understanding of the communities.	3.71	1	5
A growth of the global engagement of the communities.	3.32	1	5
A growth of the organizational capacity of the communities.	3.34	1	5
A growth of feeling like paternalism or dependency of the communities.	2.58	1	5
A growth of the environmental conservation perception.	2.86	1	5
A growth of the perception of the communities' needs and desires.	3.63	1	5
A growth of an abusive use of the people suffering with the purpose to receive funds or support of the volunteers.	2.22	1	5

The impacts of the volunteer programs on the host communities show intermediate levels of relevance to all the variables. The volunteers felt an intermediate level of relevance on the growth of wealth, knowledge, global engagement, and organizational skills of the communities as well as on the attention of the international program to the hosts needs and desires. They felt a less relevant growth of the negative impacts such as paternalism and dependency of the communities, the abusive use of the communities for profit and on the environmental conservation. This is a positive fact, but the lower values showed are not that significant what reveals that some volunteers showed some concerns on these aspects. Considering the lower means on the positive impacts of the host communities compared to the positive impacts on the volunteers, both of these results indicate that may be necessary a change on the volunteer programs services regarding the host communities, and a higher focus on the community empowerment.

Being that, the final question of the questionnaire was "in your opinion, the volunteer programs have more concerns about":

(a) The international volunteers;

(b) The host communities who receive those volunteers;

(c) Both.

The answers (a) and (b) got the same number of respondents (12) equivalent to 18.5% of the sample, which leave us with 41 volunteers who think that the international volunteer programs have equal concerns about the volunteers or the host communities. Although more than 81% of the sample think that the international volunteer programs have more or equal concerns about the host communities, they felt it is easier to have a more relevant impact on the volunteers.

4.3. Volunteers Classification

Using the conceptual framework of Callanan and Thomas [35] who classified the volunteers in three types (shallow, intermediate, and deep volunteer tourists) based on six main criteria: destination, duration of project, focus of experience (self-interest versus altruistic motivations), qualifications, active versus passive participation, and level of contribution to locals, we use our inquiry results to classify our international volunteers, we can analyse our volunteers profile in Table 6.

Table 6. Volunteer Profile Classification.

	Shallow Volunteer	**Intermediate Volunteer**	**Deep Volunteer**
Importance of destination	very important	as much important as project	project is more important than destination
Duration of participation	less than 4 weeks	1 month to 6 months	6 months or more
Focus of experience (altruistic vs. self-interest)	self-interest	both	altruistic
Skill/Qualifications	minimal skills	generic skills	may offer technical/professional skills
Active/Passive participation	passive	mixture of passive and active	active participation
Level of contribution to locals	minimal direct contribution	moderate direct contribution	high level of direct contribution

Of the six criteria, only destination and qualifications of the volunteers were not able to get from the questionnaire itself, so for the framework we will classify each volunteer according to four variables, being that, duration of the project, focus of experience, active versus passive participation and level of contribution to the locals.

To evaluate the duration of the project, on the questionnaire was asked to the volunteer how much time (in days) they have been in an international volunteer program on the last five years. To measure the focus of their experience we combined the values given to the "altruistic" factor minus the "escape" factor, where the "escape" resembles with a self-interest motivation and the other with the altruistic ones, so the greater the value, the more altruistic we consider the volunteer. Evaluating the active participation as well as the contribution was way harder because to evaluate each volunteer on the field was impossible, so we decided to give them the opportunity to evaluate themselves so, to the active participation variable we used the total amount of the evaluation given to the questions used to evaluate the impact on themselves. Considering that, the more they thought their growth was, the more active they were considered as a volunteer. For the contribution to the locals, the same perspective was used. The more they thought the growth was for the locals, the more we considered that they contributed to their well-being. All these variables were further standardized and given the same degree of importance. Afterwards, a new variable was created with values which may vary between [−6.58, 4.94]. Considering the three volunteers' types (shallow, intermediate, and deep) we decided to do the following separation:

[−7, 0]—Shallow Volunteer—32

[0, 2.5]—Intermediate Volunteer—21

[2.5, 5]—Deep Volunteer—12

Considering our results, almost 20% of the total volunteers are really committed in working as a volunteer and do the best to benefit the communities where they served, more than 30% are in an intermediate level and 50% are included in the shallow classification.

5. Discussion

5.1. Factor Analisys

The results of this analysis are somehow similar to some results found elsewhere [41] but done with potential international volunteers and with only 20 different motivations. Therefore, comparing the results, our analysis adds the desire for independency and accomplishment. This different division can be explained not only for the difference of the respondents—our study was made with people who have already volunteered—but also with the number of motivations or respondents. A more similar approach was made [50] where from 30 motivations the author got six factors, where independency is included but connected with the personal development just like in Knollenberg, but a sell fulfilment factor emerges.

This work helps the field to make it easier for volunteer tourism organizations and operators to identify the motivations of their participants, to anticipate and to better match them with the more adequate organization and/or volunteer activities, meet the non-volunteer (accommodations, tours, and other cultural activities) needs of the volunteer tourist, and reduce the negative impacts on the host community, by creating a best fit between volunteer tourists and local residents [41].

5.2. Impacts

Voluntourism may have a lot of impacts both from and to the volunteers and the host communities. Being able to evaluate those impacts may facilitate the way we see the whole field and give us a chance to make it more accurate. Asking the volunteers about their experiences on the field seemed a good way to do it.

From the volunteers point of view, voluntourism may increase international knowledge and understanding, may increase the interest in international issues and affairs and participants' respect for diversity and relationships with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures [53]. The growth for international issues may increase their civic engagement, as our results demonstrates. Sometimes, just to share their experience with others creates more awareness of the society to the conditions and problems of the communities and encourages others to take this kind of experiences [19,38]. The means of the volunteers' impacts are high, showing how significant all the impacts are on the experience, how overwhelmed and beneficial can the experience be to the volunteers, especially at a personal and cultural level. It can actually be a very transformative experience.

When organized correctly, voluntourism may increase revenues to the host communities, activate the local economy, and generate employment opportunities, [54] but reframing poverty as a sight of tourist consumption through voluntourism perpetuates a helping narrative that subscribes the geopolitical discourse of North–South relations that both depoliticizes and naturalizes global inequality and even creates dependencies on the host communities [34]. The power relations updating the discourse of voluntourism, mimic and reinforce those responsible for global inequality and poverty [2].

Voluntourism can also have impacts of a social nature, such as the strengthening of the community, enhance education, or improve residents' quality of life, can promote their culture among guests, and it is a way for them to trust foreigners which helps them feel less isolated [40]. Our results show a growth of the knowledge, skills, and intercultural understanding of the communities, as well as their engagement and organizational capacity. Although the perception of the volunteers regarding the negative impacts such as the feelings like paternalism or dependency and the use of people suffering with the purpose to receive funds are lower than the positive, in our point of view, they are still significant and it is of great importance to work the volunteers' perceptions, and eradicate this kind of potential harmful behaviours. For voluntourism to have a better impact, it is necessary to empower communities through voluntourism plans and to encourage them to work autonomously [54] having in consideration their needs and. Only with an improved understanding and awareness of potential volunteer tourism negative impacts, can the projects be planned and managed to avoid such consequences [44] and although only

almost 20% of the volunteer's got the perception that the volunteers programs were targeting more the volunteers than the communities itself, the significant differences between the growth of the host communities compared to the volunteers, demonstrates that it seems that there are a lot more to do regarding the communities and that it is fundamental to involve them in the planning and management of voluntourism programs [40].

5.3. Volunteers Classification

Our classification allowed us to aggregate the volunteers in three different categories, shallow, intermediate and deep volunteers [35].

The shallow category aggregates all the volunteers with, somehow, unexpected values in any of our four variables. For example, all the volunteers who had been volunteered for less than 15 days had all been considered shallow volunteers by this equation, volunteers more passive also tend to be in this category as well as the ones with less contribution levels. The motivation values were the ones with a larger range, in some cases, volunteers appeared with good motivation levels but the other variables did not show enough strength. This classification aggregates those with the less time in field and with the most egocentric motivations. Our results showed some resemblance with the characterization of Callanan and Thomas [35], where he explains that "the shallow volunteer tourist focuses predominantly on their self-development . . . usually participates in a project for a short duration of time . . . and makes little contribution to the local community" [35] more like a tourist not much as a volunteer. This view is many times perpetuated by the sending organizations where they "offer students the prospect of a safari in return for a couple of weeks labour in their 'gap year' or sessional break what leaves intact colonial relations of power" [2].

Therefore, we believe greater attentiveness is needed to the ways international volunteering may serve as a channel for people intervene and the ways global South spaces are seen and used in this process [8]. Furthermore, the way citizenship is attempted as processes rather than end points, and as products of negotiation around conflicting positions, and experiences, is very important to this task [55,56]. Some other suggestions may include pre-travel education and orientation, in order to prepare and explain the potential challenges [36], since most organizations that promote voluntourism, namely, the ones linked with gap years, tend to avoid the language of 'development' or use it through a narrative that consider 'development' as something that can be 'done', and particularly, by non-skilled, but passionate, volunteer-tourists, so, in a way, the perception of development as a simple matter is stimulated, and the leading discourses mention that doing something is better than doing nothing, and consequently, that doing anything, is reasonable [46]. Issues around long-term approach, along with issues on the suitability and impact of volunteers, seem to be absent [46]. Therefore, individuals and organizations tend to focus on individual development, rather than in the structural relationships between communities of the developed and developing world, maintaining their myopic attentiveness on the individual [6,46]. Moreover, certain managerial actions and transparency need to be upgraded [24].

According to our equation, intermediate volunteers usually stay on the project for a reasonable length of time with at least 30 days and most time volunteers integrate the project, showing that larger immersion is important for them to achieve their initial goals [27]. This kind of volunteers also may have a mix of both altruistic as well as more egocentric motivations but tend to have an active participation. The contribution of intermediate volunteers was not significant, this results also reinforces literature explanations [35], where an intermediate volunteer tourist focus both on altruistic and self-development motives, stays on the project for a reasonable length of time, directly contributes to the project but still ensures that has some 'holiday time' for exploring the destination.

The deep volunteers show higher values mostly at the contribution and active levels, and are the two variables that mostly contributed to this classification. The other two variables, duration and motivations, despite presenting positive values, do not show

greater difference when compared with the same values on the inferior category. The contribution of the volunteer seems to be the most relevant variable to this classification with volunteers more focused on the service aspect of volunteer tourism [41], similar to our classification of deep volunteer, were volunteers have their focus on behaving in a more respectful way and contributed positively to the local community rather than being focused on their own personal development or relationships with friends and/or family. Therefore, many of these volunteers have a honest desire to do something about the unfair world they see, even though it is a is a rewarding experience, especially as it relates to self-development [24], at the same, we can say that it is a form of tourism that accepts the empowering of locals communities, when compared to conventional modes of tourism [25] and allows the bonding with local people and experiencing local lifestyle [24]. Therefore, resisting the temptation to consider that nothing works, the truth is that we can see some cultural interaction and understanding, as well as a closer form of contact among hosts and tourists, especially during longer periods [24].

In the shallow volunteer category, we have shorter time devoted to a project, underlining self-interest; destination is far more important than the project chosen, as these kinds of volunteers are seeking for places that can fulfill their expectations and where should be easier to achieve their goals. In contrast, for the deep volunteer tourist, they are individuals with project-specific skills who spend many months working to improve conditions in host communities, at the same time self-interest motives have a more secondary role [35].

Having in consideration our results, where shallow volunteers represent almost 50% of the sample, it turns imperative to draw a line between the volunteer and the tourist experience and a need to take action and evaluate the necessity of differentiating them on the field. Therefore, our results show that the majority of volunteers are classified as shallow, underlining a more economic activity driven by profit, eventually occurring within an unregulated industry [2] and stressing that politics and political claims behind and around international volunteer tourism are fundamental [16,27,57].

6. Conclusions

In spite of multiple negative impacts such as economic and social dependency, volun-tourism can bring long-term benefits if addressed in a responsible and sustainable way [40]. If a business or organization is serious about wanting to foster transformation and to a sustainable and positive outcome [39], there should be active interventions that promote critical self-reflection, either of individual interviews or group discussions during and following travel. 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 [58]. The negative impacts associated with volunteer tourism are not necessarily inevitable, and can likely be mitigated when projects are properly planned and managed [43,44] and it is very important to fit in and match volunteers skills with the needs of the community [43].

Generically, we can point a, somehow, lack of public reflection/research or transparent self-criticism by the international volunteer co-operation sector, and it seems that this 'self-censorship' may have been singularly counterproductive as a strategy [59]. Since we are in the edge in volunteering and tourism, seems that requiring industry-wide codes of practice, and regulation is the next step to take for a cleaner and sustainable development, and a responsible marketing to avoid green-washing and inconsistencies between what they offer and the reality [27,40].

Our quantitative study allowed us to better characterize and understand what drives the international volunteers to take this kind of experience and the contributions of the projects to themselves and to the host communities. The factor analysis divided all the motivations in seven main categories—cultural exchange, altruism, accomplishment, personal challenge, relationships, independency, and escape—which facilitates the understanding of the volunteer's perspective. Those same volunteers evaluate the project contribution to themselves and the host community and it is clear that the growth to the volunteer is

significantly higher what can demonstrate a lack of attention of the projects to the community's needs and desires, what may imply that a better management is needed in order to change this perception.

Classifying the volunteers seems a bit harsh, in the perspective that they are using their own free time and many times, their own money to travel in order to help the others. Volunteers are a very important piece of the puzzle and a better management of their human capital should be done, not only to their own benefit, but also to protect the communities in order to develop solutions to decrease the negative impacts and at the same time amplify the benefits of voluntourism. More reflective exercises before, during, and after the trip, as well as social justice education [6,46] may help to emphasize and enhance the experience in order to create positive and transformative changes both for the volunteer as for the hosts.

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