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Experience Expectations of Prospective Volunteer Tourists

Kathleen Andereck[1], Nancy Gard McGehee[2], Seungwoo Lee[3], and David Clemmons[4]

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to use expectancy theory (which suggests that a travel experience that meets or exceeds tourists' expectations will be viewed positively) to explore the experience expectations and preferences of prospective volunteer tourists (voluntourists). Survey research is implemented to investigate the experience expectations of potential volunteer tourists and considers aspects of expectations that differentiate various groups. Findings indicate that the primary expectation held by respondents in general is the provision of trip-related information. A primary differentiating experience attribute among potential volunteers is the amount of contact people expect to have with residents. The intensity level of physical or emotional demands is also a differentiator. Information from this study can be useful for volunteer tour operators, NGOs, and community stakeholders in the design of a variety of volunteer tourism experiences that can meet the needs of diverse travelers.

Introduction

Volunteer tourism has grown substantially in the past several years and is receiving increased attention as a research subject. A steadily growing body of work exists in the area of volunteer tourism. Volunteer tourism (also known as voluntourism) is defined by the industry as "a seamlessly integrated combination of voluntary service to a destination along with the best, traditional elements of travel—arts, culture, geography, and history—in that destination" (http://www.voluntourism.org/index.html). In the area of academic research, McGehee and Santos (2005) define volunteer tourism as "utilizing discretionary time and income to travel out of the sphere of regular activity to assist others in need" (p. 760). Wearing (2001) defines volunteer tourism as "those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment" (p. 1). Brown (2005) defines 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). As with tourism in general, there is no universally agreed-upon definition. However, these definitions are similar in that they all argue for the inclusion of components of both tourism and volunteering.

A primary objective of tourism research in general is to investigate what potential tourists perceive as the characteristics of a trip that create a positive experience as a way to better match expectations with experiences. Little research to date considers the experience expectations of volunteer tourists. Expectations are preconceived or preexperience perceptions of a product's performance or attributes. It is important to understand expectations because evaluation of an experience is framed within a tourist's preconceived notions (Fallon 2008). Expectancy theory suggests that a travel experience that meets or exceeds tourists' expectations will be remembered positively. The purpose of this article is to investigate volunteer tourism experience expectations and consider aspects of expectations that differentiate groups using results from a survey of potential volunteer tourists. Three specific research questions are addressed: (1) What are the pretrip experience expectations among a group of prospective volunteer tourists? (2) What are the activity

[1]Arizona State University, Phoenix
[2]Virginia Tech, Blacksburg
[3]Central Connecticut State University, New Britain
[4]VolunTourism.org, San Diego

Corresponding Author:
Nancy Gard McGehee, 363A Wallace Hall, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24060
Email: nmcgehee@vt.edu

participation expectations among a group of prospective volunteer tourists? and (3) How do expectations differentiate potential volunteer tourists? This type of information can be useful in the design of volunteer tourism experiences that meet the needs of diverse travelers.

Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory, first described by Vroom (1964), is a theory of rational choice based on the principle of expected value (Pfeffer 1985). The theory is founded on two major concepts: valence and expectancy. Valence is the attractiveness of, or anticipated satisfaction with, an outcome (Pfeffer 1985; Lawler 1973). Expectancy is the likelihood that an action will lead to a certain outcome or goal (Lawler 1973) or the momentary belief that a particular action will be followed by a particular outcome (Schreyer and Roggenbuck 1978). Valence and expectancy combine together to determine behavior.

Leisure behavior, including travel, can be considered as behavior in which individuals engage with expectations of certain outcomes or rewards (Driver and Tocher 1970). Individuals may travel for different reasons, but particular kinds of travel may be more likely to provide specific outcomes. Most people participate in leisure travel to satisfy more than one expectation. The more important expectations most likely play the greatest role in decisions to participate in a particular tourism activity or choose a particular destination (Schreyer and Roggenbuck 1978).

A second theory associated with expectancy theory that provides both an explanation of people's evaluations of outcomes relative to expectations as well as the necessity of being aware of expectations is termed as discrepancy theory. Discrepancy is the difference between expected and actual outcomes. Discrepancy theory suggests that the differences between the perceived outcomes a person receives and the outcomes she or he wants or thinks she or he should receive determines satisfaction; and the sum of the discrepancies in each aspect of a situation influences satisfaction (Schreyer and Roggenbuck 1978). A substantial amount of research has been conducted using expectancy and discrepancy theories as they relate to the study of crowding perceptions in natural or other recreation and tourism settings. This line of research investigates the relationship between expectations for number of people at a site and perceptions of crowding (Lee and Graefe 2003; Manning 1986). Lee and Graefe (2003), for example, found a direct relationship between expectation of number of people and crowding perceptions at an arts festival.

Much of the focus on expectations in hospitality research has been on evaluation of service quality. This research focus usually considers the disconnect between customers' expectations of service quality and their perceptions of that quality (Noe 1999). Loizos and Lycourgos (2005) noted a relationship between customer expectations and perceptions and

customer satisfaction at hotels. This is generally the case in travel industry research as well. For example, Rodríguez del Bosque, San Martín, and Collado (2006) found expectations for service quality of travel agents was related to satisfaction with service, as did Zhou and Adrian (2009), who used the SERVQUAL instrument.

Researchers have also investigated the role of expectations and their relationship to satisfaction with tourism experiences. Zalatan (1994) found that tourists have higher satisfaction if (1) the destination is in line with their desires and (2) they have familiarity with the destination. Similarly, in a study of tourists to Zambia, Husbands (1994) found those who had realistic expectations of the product, that is, those who expected to view wildlife, scenery, and African culture, were satisfied, while those expecting more sophisticated attributes were not satisfied. Thus, the congruence between expectations and perceptions of a travel experience with the outcome of a trip will influence the extent to which it is viewed as a positive experience (Noe 1999).

Volunteer Tourism

One of the primary reasons for the recent interest in volunteer tourism is that it is perceived as a more responsible form of tourism, often aligned with sustainable tourism (Raymond and Hall 2008). A number of researchers have stressed why volunteer tourism is important (Broad 2003; Brown and Morrison 2003; McGehee 2002; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; Wearing 2001). The volunteer tourist seeks a different experience from the mass tourist. Volunteer tourism focuses on a host of both interpersonal and personal factors, including giving back to the host community, participating in community development, increased awareness of the host, self-development, altruism, cultural understanding, cultural/historical restoration, medical assistance, educational support, ecological conservation, and avoiding irreversible environmental changes (Brown and Morrison 2003; Callanan and Thomas 2005; Coghlan 2005; Gray and Campbell 2007; McIntosh and Zahra 2007; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; Uriely, Reichel, and Ron 2003; Wearing 2001).

Volunteer tourism has arguably been in existence for decades, its early forms being mission-based or religiously-oriented, then transforming to a more secular peace-corps or vista volunteer-type format before morphing to include its current diversity of options (McGehee and Anderreck 2008). Volunteer tourism has gained momentum in the latter 20th and early 21st century growing significantly since the 1970s (Ellis 2003; Wearing 2001). Brown (2005) also found that volunteer tourism organizations grew from 75 in 1987 to 275 in 2003.

While no definitive research has been conducted that identifies a profile of the volunteer tourist, existing research can be analyzed in aggregate as a way to identify trends among volunteer tourists. In terms of demographics, in general, women are more likely to participate in volunteer tourism

than men (Brown and Morrison 2003; McGehee 2002; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004). A large portion of volunteer tourists are between the ages of 35 and 44 (Kellicker 2004, cited in Brown 2005), but research indicates that volunteer tourists' ages are diverse, ranging from early 20s to senior citizens (Brown and Morrison 2003; Coghlan 2008; McIntosh and Zahra 2007; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004). Volunteer tourists come from a variety of walks of life. Their education levels vary, but many volunteer tourists have earned a college education (McGehee 2002; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004). In terms of occupation, they may be professional, retired, managerial, involved in trades/service, students, civil service, medical, financial, or homemakers (Brown and Morrison 2003; Coghlan 2008; Deery, Jago, and Shaw 1997; Lyons 2003; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004).

In relation to preferences for types of volunteer work while participating in volunteer tourism, respondents to previous research have indicated that they enjoy a variety of activities, including arts and crafts, helping orphans, educational activities, construction, physical exercise activities, and medical assistance as the most popular (Brown and Morrison 2003; Zahra and McIntosh 2007; Wearing 2001). Some volunteer tourists claim to participate in volunteer work at home (Brown and Morrison 2003; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004), but many have not (McGehee, Clemmons, and Lee 2009). Many volunteer tourists have international travel experience (McGehee 2002).

As indicated previously, since volunteer tourism is a relatively recent term (Uriely, Reichel, and Ron 2003), volunteer tourists' profiles are not well established. Not surprisingly, there is even less research that has examined *potential* volunteer tourists' expectations. A few studies have considered existing volunteer tourists' motives for engaging in volunteer tourism experiences (Broad and Jenkins 2008; Halpenny and Caissie 2003; McIntosh and Zahra 2007; Simpson 2004; Söderman and Snead 2008; Wearing 2001) but none have explored expectations using expectancy theory as a foundation. This paper represents a step toward a better understanding of the experience expectations of a large group of prospective volunteer tourists.

Method

The survey instrument used for this study was created using suveymonkey.com. An initial draft of the instrument was piloted using an online class of 355 students. Responses were then analyzed, resulting in further refinement of the instrument. Beginning in January 2008, a link was promoted through the VolunTourism.org website, the VolunTourism. org newsletter (*The VolunTourist Newsletter*), and various media outlets. The target population consisted of potential volunteer tourists. While the survey was available to anyone worldwide, it was written in English only. After six months, the survey was closed (June 2008). More than 1,100 potential

volunteer tourists responded to the survey, with 824 completed instruments. Given the nature of the survey, the sample should be considered a convenience sample and is thus not strictly generalizable to a wide population.

The survey consisted of seven sections. The variables used for this study include demographic variables of gender and age as well as variables that measure prospective volunteer tourist expectations of a volunteer tourism trip, all on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all expect* to 5 = *fully expect*), including pretrip services expectations; activity participation expectations during the experience; and expectations of amount of interaction during the experience with residents. In addition to expectation variables, several other measures were considered in this analysis: willingness to participate in pretrip preparation activities (1 = *very unwilling* to 5 = *very willing*); preferences for volunteer tourism activities (type of experience, where 1 = *lowest preference* and 5 = *highest preference*); comfort level with activities (where 1 = *lowest preference* and 5 = *highest preference*); and orientation activities (where 1 = *not at all expect* and 5 = *fully expect*); and travel-related variables, including international travel experience (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) and comfort level with accommodations and services (1 = *very uncomfortable* and 5 = *very comfortable*).

As volunteer tourism is a unique form of tourism, and as research in volunteer tourism is in its infancy, scales for the survey instrument were developed and tested in the field using a number of steps. First, existing volunteer tourism websites were analyzed according to pretrip services they offer. Second, the existing literature on volunteer tourism was analyzed with an eye toward comments made by respondents regarding service expectations. Third, a panel of experts in volunteer tourism that consisted of two volunteer tourism tour operators, three volunteer tourism researchers, and a volunteer tourism consultant evaluated the list and further refined it. Fourth, the pilot survey was conducted and the items were analyzed for validity. In addition, the "other" category provided in the pilot study was analyzed, and items frequently mentioned under "other" were added to the scale. Finally, a beta survey was conducted in 2007, whereupon the items were further refined and evaluated.

As a result of the aforementioned process, 18 items were included in the survey for pretrip expectations, 16 items were included in the survey for activity participation expectations during the experience, and 4 items were included in the survey for expectations of amount of interaction with residents during the experience. Willingness to participate in pretrip preparation activities (1 = *very unwilling* to 5 = *very willing*) consisted of seven items; eight items were developed that measure preferences for specific volunteer tourism activities (type of experience, where 1 = *lowest preference* and 5 = *highest preference*); six items measured both physical and mental/emotional comfort level with activities (where 1 = *lowest preference* and 5 = *highest preference*); six items

Table 1. Factor Analysis of Pretrip Expectations

Domains	Factor Loadings	Eigen-value	Variance Explained
Trip preparation			
A responsible travel policy	.766		
A list of suggested preventive medical treatment	.684		
Suggested packing list	.682		
List of cultural do's and don'ts	.622		
Detailed itinerary	.622		
Detailed explanation of distribution of funds from your other travelers	.540		
Materials relating to culture of your destination	.430		
$\alpha = .81, M = 4.4$		3.33	18.49
General information			
Online community of volunteer tourism participants	.809		
Newsletter about volunteer tourism	.791		
Videos/DVDs pertaining to your destination	.576		
Group meetings/pretrip briefings	.473		
List of online resources	.439		
$\alpha = .75, M = 4.0$		2.47	13.74
Physical preparation			
List of physical exercises to prepare body for travel service related work	.839		
Dietary suggestions prepare body for travel service related work	.836		
$\alpha = .89, M = 3.7$		2.15	11.98
Skills			
Language course	.873		
Skill-building classes	.870		
$\alpha = .80, M = 3.3$		1.967	10.93
Pre- and posttrip activities			
List of pretrip/posttrip add-on experiences	.799		
Pretrip training on key elements of being a volunteer tourist	.402		
$\alpha = .56, M = 3.9$		1.43	7.97

measured orientation activities (where 1 = *not at all expect* to 5 = *fully expect*); and travel-related variables, including three items measuring international travel experience (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) and comfort level with accommodations (six items) and eight items measured services (1 = *very uncomfortable* and 5 = *very comfortable*).

Results

Respondents to the volunteer tourism survey reported basic demographic statistics regarding age and gender. The mean age of respondents was 33 years, with 40% of respondents between the age of 20 and 30. The largest age group represented was 26 to 30, followed by 21 to 25 and 31 to 35. The majority of the respondents were female (74%), which is representative of current volunteer tourists. When asked how they found the survey, nearly half (44%) reported learning about the survey as a result of an online search. For those who selected "other" responses as to how they discovered the survey, the majority fell into three categories: searching for volunteer tourism trips, browsing the Internet, and personal interest.

When respondents were asked about their past leisure travel, 42% reported participating in leisure travel for more than 14 days in 2007. Respondents were, in general, experienced in international travel (83%) and many (71%) had experience traveling where they did not speak the native language. Interestingly, most respondents were not regular volunteers at home, with 32% reporting that they did not volunteer at all, and the majority (41%) volunteering five or fewer hours per week at home.

Prior to further analysis, several sets of experience variables were factor analyzed to make the number of variables more manageable. Principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was used on several items measuring respondents' level of expectation regarding what services a volunteer tourism trip provider should offer prior to departure (Table 1). The analysis resulted in five domains: trip preparation, general information, physical preparation, skills, and pre- and posttrip activities. Respondents have fairly high expectations for pretrip services from the volunteer tourism trip providers, especially for trip preparation services such as packing lists and cultural information and less so for skill

Table 2. Factor Analysis of Activity Participation Expectations

Domains	Factor Loadings	Eigen-value	Variance Explained
Participate			
Learn to create local arts and crafts	.786		
Learn to play local music	.779		
Participate in traditional dance	.704		
Participate in making traditional food items	.698		
$\alpha = .74, M = 3.4$		3.81	23.81
Observe			
Observe local residents' food preparation	.542		
Agriculture and food growing	.541		
Listen to local music	.768		
Listen to local storytelling and oral history	.667		
Observe traditional dance	.664		
Eat traditional food items	.652		
Observe artisans/ craftspersons at work	.582		
Listen to presentations by local experts	.482		
$\alpha = .86, M = 4.0$		3.37	21.04
Purchase			
Purchase local arts and crafts	.731		
Purchasing books and reading materials pertaining to destination	.667		
Purchase traditional food products to take home	.652		
Purchase local music	.627		
$\alpha = .56, M = 3.9$		2.28	14.24

building and language classes. A second principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on a set of items measuring expectations related to participation in a variety of activities (Table 2). This analysis resulted in three domains: participate, observe, and purchase. Respondents have higher expectations of observing local activities and purchasing products than participating in activities (Table 2).

A *k*-means cluster analysis was done to determine the experience preferences that most differentiate potential volunteer tourists. Cluster analysis is used to group respondents into homogeneous segments based on the variables of interest. The expectation domains developed from the factor analyses and four other variables related to interaction with residents at the destination were included. The four interaction variables were work side-by-side with local residents each day, work side-by-side with other volunteer tourists only, share meals with local residents each day, and have close physical contact with local residents. The final solution was five clusters.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done to determine specific differences between the clusters. First, the variables used for the cluster analysis were analyzed to identify and characterize the different groups (Table 2). ANOVA was then conducted with the remaining variables to further describe the clusters (Tables 3-6).

Although the cluster analysis and ANOVA reveal differences between the groups, there are some general observations that can first be made about the results. On average, all groups have high means with respect to trip expectations and pretrip activity participation, though cluster differences do exist (Tables 4 and 5). In the area of experience preferences, there are no significant differences between clusters with respect to advanced skill required, environmental experiences, and experiences with animals: in general, the respondents rated experiences that require advanced skills the lowest, and working with animals and the environment highest (Table 5). While clusters differ with respect to members' international travel experience, on average all have at least some experience. With respect to services and amenities, hotel accommodations are preferred by all, but some groups are more comfortable with alternative lodging such as homestays than others; and while most have preferences for more services, lack of services such as daily showers and indoor restroom facilities are more acceptable to some groups than others. All of the clusters rated access to the Internet and phone service as a low priority (Table 6). Interestingly, no demographic differences (gender and age) between clusters emerged in the analysis.

Cluster 1, the unadventurous. This group seems to expect the least from their experience. They do not expect the provider to offer pretrip services to the same extent as other clusters nor are they expecting as much with respect to activities other than the volunteer tourism work during the trip. One of the defining aspects of this group is they have the lowest expectations for close interaction with residents. They are the least willing to participate in pretrip activities though it should be noted they are still willing to do so. This is also the case with orientation activities; they rate them the lowest of the clusters but such activities are still expected. Their highest preferences include experiences with an environmental, animal, or cultural focus, while these respondents are less interested in art types of experiences or those that require advanced skills. They are least inclined to work with projects related to basic human needs or with children, which

Table 3. ANOVA of Clusters and Expectation Variables

Variables	Cluster Experience Means					F	p
	1	2	3	4	5		
Trip preparation	4.06[a]	4.62[b]	4.12[a]	4.54[b]	4.51[b]	42.2	.00
General information	3.38[a]	4.26[b]	3.49[a]	4.19[b]	3.97[c]	67.9	.00
Physical preparation	2.35[a]	4.15[b]	2.90[c]	4.04[b]	4.13[b]	152.4	.00
Skills	2.80[a]	3.61[b]	2.65[a]	3.58[b]	3.22[c]	32.4	.00
Pre and post activities	3.26[a]	4.27[b]	3.37[a]	4.12[c]	4.09[c]	68.1	.00
Participate	2.56[a]	3.68[b]	2.80[c]	3.71[b]	2.99[d]	86.3	.00
Observe	3.40[a]	4.35[b]	3.70[c]	4.28[b]	3.72[c]	94.4	.00
Purchase	2.91[a]	3.75[b]	3.04[a]	3.75[b]	3.21[c]	49.6	.00
Work side-by-side with residents	3.61[a]	4.40[b]	4.20[c]	4.59[d]	3.55[a]	99.3	.00
Work side-by-side with volunteers only	3.72[a]	2.02[b]	1.99[b]	4.41[c]	3.14[d]	342.8	.00
Share meals with residents	3.13[a]	4.26[b]	3.87[c]	4.21[b]	3.31[d]	90.9	.00
Close physical contact with residents	2.92[a]	4.35[b]	4.10[c]	4.26[bc]	3.02[a]	140.1	.00

Notes: Means with different superscript letters are statistically different at the .05 level.

Table 4. ANOVA of Pretrip Activity Participation

Pretrip Activities	Means					F	p
	1	2	3	4	5		
Take a language course	4.20[ac]	4.49[b]	4.04[a]	4.31[bc]	4.01[a]	10.1	.00
Develop skill to meet a specific need in a destination	4.14[a]	4.50[b]	4.32[c]	4.40[bc]	4.07[a]	12.6	.00
Read materials relating to the culture of your destination	4.60[a]	4.88[b]	4.87[b]	4.74[c]	4.71[ac]	7.7	.00
Participate in group meetings, pretrip briefings	4.32[a]	4.67[b]	4.49[c]	4.56[bc]	4.44[ab]	6.4	.00
Exchange online communications with other trip participants	4.46[a]	4.69[bc]	4.69[bc]	4.74[c]	4.56[ab]	5.5	.00
Subscribe to a newsletter about volunteer tourism	4.02[a]	4.50[b]	4.34[b]	4.41[b]	4.32[b]	6.1	.00
Watch videos/DVDs pertaining to your destinations	4.51[a]	4.74[b]	4.67[bc]	4.58[ac]	4.62[ac]	3.3	.01

Notes: Means with different superscript letters are statistically different at the .05 level.

is consistent with their lower comfort level with mentally or emotionally intense experiences. They have a fairly high level of international travel experience. Another defining aspect of this group is they have a preference for a higher level of amenities than others: they are most comfortable in a hotel, with their own room, and want access to warm showers and indoor restrooms. While this group has the lowest expectations with many aspects of the experience, they can be characterized as the least "adventurous" and would be best suited toward environmental projects in developed countries, where they can stay in a hotel. Their lower experience-related expectations could be due to their vision of a trip in a setting where

they are already comfortable and do not require a great deal of preparation and facilitation.

Cluster 2, the humanists. This group is the most different from the *Unadventurous*. They have the highest expectations for pretrip services from the provider and for extra activities during the experience. They also have the highest expectations for close contact with residents, including close physical contact such as caring for small children and comforting the sick and dying. Consistent with these characteristics, they are also the most willing to participate in pretrip activities, and as part of their experience serve basic human needs and work with children. Also consistent with these findings,

Table 5. ANOVA of Experience Preference

Experience Preference Variables	Means					F	p
	1	2	3	4	5		
Type of experience							
Working with adults	3.22[ab]	3.64[b]	3.48[bc]	3.43[ab]	3.15[a]	4.8	.00
Advanced skill required	2.44	2.59	2.45	2.49	2.35	0.8	.51
Animals	3.61	3.64	3.53	3.75	3.57	0.6	.63
Art	2.88[a]	3.18[ab]	3.26[b]	3.51[c]	3.02[ab]	4.6	.00
Basic human needs	3.56[a]	4.17[b]	4.11[b]	4.04[b]	3.65[a]	11.8	.00
Children	3.70[a]	4.14[b]	4.29[b]	4.15[b]	3.65[a]	10.3	.00
Environment	3.86	3.92	3.93	4.02	3.92	1.2	.32
Cultural preservation	3.60[ab]	3.96[bc]	3.55[a]	4.04[c]	3.68[ab]	4.3	.00
Physical and mental intensity comfortable with							
Physically intense labor	3.06[a]	3.02[a]	2.99[b]	3.21[b]	2.69[a]	3.7	.01
Mentally or emotionally intense experiences	2.83[a]	3.78[b]	3.63[b]	3.51[b]	2.83[a]	21.9	.00
Moderately intense physical activity	4.38[ab]	4.50[a]	4.35[ab]	4.53[b]	4.25[a]	3.5	.01
Moderately intense mental or emotional experiences	3.79[a]	4.30[c]	4.36[c]	4.05[b]	3.73[a]	12.5	.00
Light physical activity	4.51	4.45	4.43	4.46	4.45	0.1	.97
Less intense mental or emotional experiences	4.21	4.31	4.21	3.99	4.24	2.1	.07
Orientation activities							
Meet your host team	4.40[a]	4.76[b]	4.48[a]	4.69[bc]	4.62[c]	8.9	.00
Meet your fellow volunteer tourists	4.34[a]	4.70[b]	4.46[ac]	4.67[bd]	4.54[cd]	7.4	.00
Site familiarization	4.36[a]	4.70[b]	4.35[a]	4.61[bc]	4.50[c]	8.5	.00
Introduction to local residents	3.57[a]	4.39[b]	3.98[c]	4.28[b]	3.99[c]	21.3	.00
Review of itinerary	4.06[a]	4.55[b]	4.03[a]	4.54[b]	4.50[b]	19.9	.00
Review of personal conduct and policies	4.18[a]	4.64[b]	4.18[a]	4.53[bc]	4.46[c]	14.5	.00

Notes: Means with different superscript letters are statistically different at the .05 level.

this group is the most comfortable with mentally or emotionally intense experiences but is also comfortable with physical activity. Somewhat oddly, they have relatively low expectations for orientation activities at the start of the experience. Cluster 2 has a fair amount of international travel experience. They have the highest comfort level with alternative accommodations such as sharing a room, dorm-style lodging, homestays, or camping. In keeping with their interest in interaction with residents, they rank the highest with preference for locally prepared foods. While their preference for daily access to indoor restroom facilities is lower than Cluster 1, they still prefer this convenience. This type of prospective volunteer tourist is likely to be the most comfortable in less-developed countries or with disaster relief, though they want to be well prepared for their experience and get the most out of their trip. They are unlikely to be satisfied with their trip if they do not have intense interaction with residents.

Cluster 3, the community involved. Like the *Unadventurous*, Cluster 3 does not have high expectations for pretrip services from the provider or for activities during the experience. They also have similarly lower expectations for orientation activities, though they do expect such activities. What sets Cluster 3 apart from Cluster 1 is its members do not expect to work only with other volunteer tourists; they expect to work with residents, although their expectation for more intense interaction with residents is in the midrange of the means. With respect to pretrip activities, as with all the clusters, they are willing to participate in activities but they would be most willing to prepare by reading recommended materials. This group has the greatest preference for working with children but also would have interest in basic human need provision. They have a high comfort level with intense emotional and mental experiences and somewhat less comfort with physical labor. This cluster has members with the highest

Table 6. ANOVA of Travel-Related Variables

Travel-Related Variables	Means					F	p
	1	2	3	4	5		
International travel experience							
Have traveled internationally	4.23[ab]	4.29[b]	4.39[b]	3.93[a]	3.94[a]	4.2	.00
Have experience traveling where I do not speak the native language	3.85[ab]	3.86[ab]	4.04[b]	3.59[ac]	3.47[c]	4.2	.00
Experience is limited to domestic travel	1.90[ab]	2.02[bc]	1.67[a]	2.36[d]	2.29[cd]	6.3	.00
Accommodation preferences							
Hotel accommodations	4.61[a]	4.44[ab]	4.21[c]	4.27[bc]	4.46[ab]	4.6	.00
Private double room	4.56[a]	4.38[ab]	4.35[b]	4.32[b]	4.49[ab]	2.2	.06
Share a double room	3.78[ab]	3.97[b]	3.90[b]	3.78[ab]	3.64[a]	3.9	.00
Dorm/group-style arrangements	3.36[a]	3.72[b]	3.62[b]	3.55[ab]	3.31[a]	4.8	.00
Homestays	3.25[a]	3.93[c]	3.84[c]	3.60[b]	3.42[ab]	11.8	.00
Camping	3.26[ab]	3.62[c]	3.54[bc]	3.45[bc]	3.13[a]	5.2	.00
Service preferences							
Access to locally prepared foods	3.97[a]	4.38[b]	4.25[bc]	4.08[ab]	4.06[a]	8.0	.00
Support special dietary needs	3.17[a]	3.47[b]	3.51[b]	3.44[b]	3.37[ab]	2.3	.06
A wide range of food selections	3.85	4.05	3.83	4.00	3.86	2.2	.06
Daily access to shower with hot water	4.16[a]	3.92[b]	3.70[c]	3.98[bc]	3.97[b]	4.2	.00
Daily access to indoor restroom facility	4.24[a]	4.04[ab]	3.90[b]	4.08[ab]	4.13[a]	2.6	.03
Access to telephone service	3.50	3.49	3.46	3.57	3.51	.35	.84
Access to Internet service	3.47	3.45	3.50	3.50	3.52	.20	.93
Access to Western-styled medical assistance	3.91	3.81	3.81	3.99	3.93	1.4	.22

Notes: Means with different superscript letters are statistically different at the .05 level.

amount of international travel experience, including in non–English-speaking countries, and the lowest level of only domestic travel. They have a high comfort level with alternative accommodations and hotel stays are rated the lowest (though they are comfortable with such lodging). They are also the most likely to find lack of daily access to showers and indoor restrooms acceptable. This cluster would not be happy with their experience if they had interaction only with other volunteer tourists. They are best suited for situations that may be rustic but require caring kinds of services rather than physical. For example, they may be interested in working in hospitals or orphanages, or teaching children in a remote village.

Cluster 4, the laborers. Cluster 4 has many similarities to Cluster 2 with respect to experience expectations. Members have high expectations with regard to provider pretrip services and during-experience activities. Although they expect interaction with residents, they also seem to indicate interaction only with other volunteer tourists would also be acceptable. As with the other clusters, they are willing to participate in pretrip activities but rank the highest with respect to online interaction with other trip participants, consistent with their

apparent interest in social interaction with other volunteer tourists. While their greatest preference is for working with children and meeting basic human needs, this group also has the highest arts and culture experiences' ratings. They are the most comfortable with physical labor as opposed to more emotional experiences. The members of this group have the least international travel experience and fall in the middle with respect to accommodations and service preferences. This is a group that would likely be satisfied with physical kinds of projects that may or may not include residents. They would be most comfortable with quite a bit of pretrip services provision and projects in more developed areas. Examples might include building houses or working on park trail projects.

Cluster 5, the nonsocial. Cluster 5 has fewer defining characteristics than the other clusters in that the means tend to be in the midrange. This group has the lowest expectation of working with residents as well as fairly low expectations for more intense interaction with residents. It also ranks low on experience preferences that involve working with people, which is consistent with the lower interaction expectations. The group is not comfortable with either emotionally or physically intense activity. The members of this group have less

international travel experience than most of the other clusters and are not as comfortable with alternative lodging as most others. They also have a preference for indoor restroom facilities. People in Cluster 5 would likely be best suited to experiences in small groups that do not require heavy physical activity and that may or may not include residents. Most probably they would feel more comfortable in a hotel located in fairly developed destinations. The people in this group might find environmental projects that do not require a great deal of physical activity rewarding, such as light clean-up projects for example.

Discussion and Conclusion

To date, little research exists that analyzes a large sample of prospective volunteer tourists. Although these results obviously cannot be applied to a broad and general population of tourists, they do provide insight into the array of expectations that exist among a more targeted group of potential volunteer tourists. It is clear from this study that volunteer tourists are not a homogeneous group. In general, this study has shown us that a potential volunteer tourism market exists that is unsure about where to start and hesitant to pursue volunteer tourism because of their lack of knowledge about how to find volunteer tourism organizations that "fit" with their needs and expectations. In spite of these limitations, they are interested enough to complete an extensive survey with virtually no external incentive.

Findings from this study can assist volunteer tourism providers attempting to design a suite of programs that appeal to diverse groups of people. By identifying groups of prospective volunteer tourists that have similar expectations and preferences, volunteer tourism providers can match volunteer tourists with community needs, providing for both the desires of the tourists and the best interests of the community.

Three research questions were specifically addressed in this study. Research Question 1 asks: what are the pretrip experience expectations among a group of prospective volunteer tourists? Factor analysis reveals the primary expectation held by respondents in general is provision of trip-related information. They expect to be well informed regarding clothing and items to take on their trips, as well as culturally appropriate behavior. Volunteer tour operators will serve their participants well by providing adequate pretrip information.

The second research question addresses activity participation expectations. Many prospective voluntourists expect to actively engage with residents. Operators who provide opportunities for tourist–resident interaction will better meet their client's needs. If a high level of interaction is not possible, many voluntourists would still be satisfied observing performances and presentations.

Research Question 3 explores how prospective volunteer tourist's expectations may differ and as a result create clusters. The data confirmed that in fact there are distinct clusters

of potential volunteer tourists. First, groups of respondents are fairly different regarding their expectations for pretrip services, especially physical preparation. Second, one of the primary differentiating experience attributes is the amount of contact people expect to have with residents; some expect limited interaction, while others expect intense involvement. Similarly, some groups are more inclined to work alongside local residents than are others. Third, the intensity level of physical or emotional demands is a differentiator, as well. While previous studies have discovered differences between voluntourists and mass tourists (Brown and Morrison 2003; Callanan and Thomas 2005; Coghlan 2005; Gray and Campbell 2007; McIntosh and Zahra 2007; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; Uriely, Reichel, and Ron 2003; Wearing 2001), there are clearly differences with regard to interpersonal and personal factors among voluntourists themselves. As a result, volunteer tourism projects that provide a variety of pretrip services, incorporate varying degrees of resident interaction, include different levels of emotional and physical intensity, and have a range of types of accommodations and other services available, can appeal to diverse kinds of people and result in satisfying and fulfilling volunteer tourism experiences.

Conversely, while this study makes no claims of overall generalizability to a larger population, there are some commonalities across the sample clusters. All expect to find a quality volunteer tourism experience for an economical price and most want an international experience that is relatively close to home (within the Western Hemisphere). Unlike many mass tourism markets, potential volunteer tourists who responded to this survey are not interested in autonomy; quite the opposite. They expect to be provided with a great deal of information and instruction from their tour providers, but they also take personal responsibility for pretrip preparation and education.

When considering how to incorporate the results of this study into programming and service offerings, marketing and promotions, and training of staff and host communities, there are two primary items worthy of consideration: (1) the large percentage of potential volunteer tourists who reported low levels of volunteer experience at home, and (2) the interaction preferences indicated by the study population (Table 2).

In terms of voluntary service, Table 1 offers responses regarding experience volunteering at home during 2007. Nearly one-third (31.7%) of respondents in each cluster report that they did not volunteer in 2007, a finding consistent with McGehee, Clemmons, and Lee (2009), who noted that voluntourists do not necessarily engage in volunteerism at home. This raises several questions for volunteer tourism operators and hosts to consider:

> Are you likely to have a group of volunteer tourists that includes a mix of individuals that volunteer regularly at home and ones that do not?

How will this impact the synergy among members of the group, the host community, and your staff?

To what extent will this influence the application process, pretrip training and orientation, on-site interaction, daily orientation and experiential processing, and posttrip evaluation and follow-up?

These may not be questions that volunteer tourism operators currently consider. Those that offer individual placements, rather than group placements, may have an advantage in terms of screening for those without previous or recent volunteer experience. With group placements, however, this may prove more difficult. In addition, this may also be something that NGOs and nonprofits will want to review, especially when collaborating with trip providers or destination management companies that may not be screening applicants' volunteer experiences. In any of these situations, it may be worthwhile to develop a set of training materials designated specifically for those who may not regularly volunteer, have not volunteered recently, or have never volunteered. Handled appropriately, this may serve all stakeholders—participants, community residents, tour providers, and staff—by generating discussion and facilitating, perhaps, a connection between those who have volunteered and those who have not. This may lead to the creation of a "volunteer tourist-buddy system" or mentoring approach, especially in group settings.

The variation in study responses regarding interaction preferences may provide an interesting dilemma for volunteer tourism operators that offer group, dorm-style, or homestay accommodations in which volunteer tourists do not have private sleeping quarters or a space of their own. Factoring some "individual" time into the itinerary could require such things as additional staff support, additional security measures, or designated spaces for privacy within the housing structure.

Limitations of the Study

With all research, there are a number of limitations to this study. As a specific sample population was not identified and targeted, and as an open request was made for anyone to access the survey instrument and complete it, there are certain sampling limitations. No claims of generalizability have been made of the findings as this is obviously a convenience sample.

Future Research

When outlining future research strategies for volunteer tourism, the subject of longitudinal research must be considered. If the phenomenon of volunteer tourism is examined only with a short lens, a great deal of valuable information will be lost. Tracking potential volunteer tourists over time is crucial to gaining a better understanding of them. In addition to lengthening the lens over time, it should be deepened as well. Greater use of in-depth interviews, journaling, and other qualitative techniques will certainly "grow" the research in the right direction. Finally, targeting a generalizable sample of persons who have participated in volunteer tourism is desirable as well, although this continues to be a difficult task for those of us studying volunteer tourism, given the fragmented nature of the phenomenon.

While this study took great advantage of the existing tourism and volunteer tourism literature, very little attention was paid to the volunteer literature, which is very rich. Future research should take this body of knowledge into account, especially in terms of expectations. In particular, it is hoped that the volunteer literature can assist with the development of a mechanism that can match potential volunteers with volunteer tour providers. This is a crucial issue within the industry.

The unique contribution of this study is that it is the first of its kind to attempt to examine the *potential* volunteer tourist, a population that has not been targeted for study. Likewise, this is the first study of its kind to examine volunteer tourism in the context of expectancy theory. However, this research is only a start toward gaining a better idea of what prospective volunteer tourists expect and prefer in their experiences. Additional large-scale work with more general groups of respondents is needed to build on previous work. The challenge is gaining access to a sizeable general population of potential volunteer tourists.

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Bios

Kathleen Andereck is Director and Professor in the School of Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University. She studies tourism as experienced by both residents and tourists. Much of her work focuses on resident attitudes toward tourism and tourist expectations and perceptions of their experiences.

Nancy Gard McGehee is a sociologist and associate professor in the Hospitality and Tourism Management program at Virginia Tech. She focuses her research on the sociocultural impacts of tourism.

Seungwoo John Lee is assistant professor in Tourism and Hospitality Studies at Central Connecticut State University. His research interests are volunteer tourism and residents' perceptions.

David Clemmons is the founder of VolunTourism.org. His research interests include subjective well-being and its correlation with social responsibility.