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ARE VISITORS INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEER TOURISM? EVIDENCE FROM SLOVAKIA*

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Received 12 October 2019; accepted 15 April 2020; published 30 June 2020

Abstract. Volunteer tourism is one of the fastest growing types of alternative travel, highlighting the need for sustainability. It has been studied in a number of researches that focus almost exclusively on the demand for certain projects in outbound tourism. With the aim of a more comprehensive view of the issue, this paper examines and compare the current state of demand for domestic and outgoing volunteer tourism within Slovakia. It is based on a quantitative survey conducted on a sample of 573 respondents who represent a representative picture of the population of Slovakia older than 15 years in terms of age and gender. It turns out that between 18 and 25% of the Slovak population participated in domestic volunteer tourism between 2013 and 2018 (in average 3-4% a year). Outbound volunteer tourism was 4 to 8% (approximately 1% a year). In both cases, potential demand clearly exceeds effective demand. As individuals grow older, participation in volunteer tourism decrease slightly, while participation in the home country is positively influenced by higher education while participation abroad is dependent on the individual's economic status. Participation in domestic volunteer tourism is largely influenced by volunteer-specific motives, this differs from outbound tourism, where tourist specific motives prevail. In the home country. Volunteers sometimes do not realize that they are involved in tourism; the altruistic motive of helping others is paramount. Important information about national volunteer tourism of Slovak residents is obtained mostly from direct sources. Time is the most decisive obstacle to people's participation in volunteer tourism. Comparing the demand of Slovak citizens for domestic and outgoing volunteer tourism shows the possibilities of its further development.

* This research was supported by the VEGA project no. V-18-101-07-101312: Abandoned Slovakia: Effective solutions to the creative reuse of abandoned properties in non-urban areas.



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Keywords: volunteer tourism; domestic volunteer tourism; outgoing volunteer tourism; demand

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Pompurová, K., Sokolová, J., Cole, D., Marčeková, R., Kožíak, R. 2020. Are visitors interested in volunteer tourism? Evidence from Slovakia. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 7(4), 3339-3353. [http://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2020.7.4\(50\)](http://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2020.7.4(50))

JEL Classifications: L83, O15, Z39

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing and most promising sectors of the world economy, with a vital contribution to the economic strength and social development, and high potential for long-term growth (Chkalova et al. 2019). According to the World Tourism Organization, the European tourism economy contributes between 5 and 11% of the GDP of the European Union and provides between 8 and 24 million jobs, depending on the definition of the sector (Linderová & Janeček 2017). As tourism evolved, its original meaning of traveling to the unknown, to places outside of the ordinary, where visitors experience a sense of excitement by having direct contact with the local community, has changed. It was replaced by traveling and getting to know places from the safety and comfort of sofas, planes, and hotel rooms, without direct contact with local culture. Gradually, the negative economic effects began to emerge, especially on developing countries where the growth of foreign visitors seriously disrupted the community's life and cultural identity (Wearing & Grabowski 2011). As the prosperity of the world increases, more people are able to enjoy trips that were once only possible for the select few. Dream destinations have now become possible for many throughout the world. This has led to too many people trying to visit the “must see” locations of the world creating “tourist ghettos”. This inevitably leads to disappointment as people are reduced to a melancholy mass. The rapid growth of mass tourism and the increased interest in the socio-cultural and environmental impact of tourism has resulted in its alternative version. Concerns about global warming are causing some people to question their travel habits. As an example, the recent actions of the Swedish schoolgirl turned environmental activist, Greta Thunberg, has caused a new phenomenon called flygskam or flight-shame where there is a sense of guilt from the carbon emissions of air-travel.

An alternative to mass tourism, in theory, deliver rewarding experiences and promise beneficial economic, environmental, and social outcomes for destination and its communities (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017). It includes a wide range of different types of tourism. These are often the result of deeper involvement of other scientific disciplines (sociology, ecology, psychology, etc.) into tourism or arise from overlaps of already existing types of tourism. One of the fastest growing types of alternative tourism is volunteer tourism (Hammersley 2014; Miller & Mair 2015; Kontogeorgopoulos 2017; Proyrungroj 2017, 2020), created by combining volunteering and tourism (Tomazos & Butler 2012; Andereck & McGehee 2016).

As Wearing et al. (2020) discuss, volunteer tourism has gained considerable popularity with tourists. Its success depends on the willingness of volunteer tourists to engage in a travel experience that involves assisting a destination community and engaging in the hardship work.

2. Volunteer tourism

The tourism industry of the 21st century is experiencing the expansion and increased prominence of volunteer tourism (Thompson & Taheri 2020). As Qi (2020) stresses, the volunteer tourism is an important branch of tourism academy. Due to the significance of volunteers for the tourism industry, a variety of research on volunteer tourism from around the globe has emerged. The first comprehensive and generally accepted term is the Wearing

(2001) definition of volunteer tourism, according to which it is a travel of persons who organize their leisure time for various reasons, and their stay at the destination includes volunteering aimed at alleviating the material shortage of certain social groups or to research selected aspects of society and the environment. Its focus is relatively narrow. It does not include, for example, the activities carried out by volunteers, the timeframe and the potential to change and develop the personality of the volunteer (Alexander & Bakir 2011). Singh & Singh (2004) evaluate volunteer tourism in terms of the ideals associated with it and, together with McGehee & Santos (2005), highlight the altruistic motive of participating in volunteer tourism activities. Chen & Chen (2011) point out the benefits that volunteer tourism also brings to the destination. In spite of the authors' undisputed efforts to define volunteer tourism more precisely, we did not succeed in creating a definition that would comprehensively express its essence. Volunteer tourism is a multi-dimensional tourism product and therefore the boundaries of its definition are constantly shifting (Benson 2011).

The boom of volunteer tourism has caused ambiguities not only with the definition, but also in defining its context. The relationship between volunteering and tourism has thus been the subject of much research. Available literature includes heterogeneous studies assessing the impact of volunteer tourism on local communities (e.g. Lupoli & Morse 2015; Dilette et al. 2017), sustainability of volunteer tourism (e.g. Dickson 2011; Fee & Mdee 2011), practices of volunteer tourism organisations (ex. Steele et al. 2017), volunteer tourism supply chain (Eckardt et al 2020) etc. However, theorists pay the most interest to the bearer of the demand for volunteer tourism. They simply perceive a visitor in volunteer tourism as an individual who combines travel with volunteer work (Raymond & Hall 2008). They examine his motivation, values and behaviour (e.g. Tomazos & Butler 2012; Mody et al. 2014; Weaver 2015; Sokolová & Žofaj 2017), perceptions of their impacts on communities (e. g. Aquino & Andereck 2018), lessons learned (e.g. Chan 2011; Wilson 2015), but also obstacles to volunteer participation tourism (Trafford Council 2011; Human & Van Graan 2013; Weaver 2015).

Given the roots of volunteer tourism related to the travel of missionaries, doctors and teachers to help other, generally less developed communities, volunteer tourism research focuses almost exclusively on the demand for selected foreign volunteer projects. Domestic volunteer tourism or research into the demand for volunteer tourism at the national level is hardly addressed in the available literature. Our ambition was to fill this gap.

3. Research methodology

The aim of the paper is to examine and compare the current state of demand for domestic and outgoing volunteer tourism using the example of Slovakia. The primary data were obtained through a sociological questionnaire intended for Slovak citizens over 15 years of age. We conducted the survey in 2018 on a sample of 703 respondents who were asked for information on the experience of volunteer tourism over the last years (2013 to 2018). We recoded and processed the data into a data matrix in Microsoft Excel.

We excluded 27 incorrectly completed questionnaires. In order to achieve representativeness of the sample, we subsequently excluded 103 questionnaires. Subsequently, after evaluating the representativeness of the file in question by Pearson's Chi-square test for quality, 103 questionnaires were randomly removed in order to bring the sample closer to the age and gender structure of the Slovak population ($\chi^2_{\text{gender}}=0.389$, $p=0.533$; $\chi^2_{\text{age}}=9.290$, $p=0.054$). The final sample consists of 573 respondents (Table 1).

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample of respondents

Identifying Characteristics	Respondents together		Participants in domestic volunteer tourism		Participants in volunteer tourism	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender						
Male	278	48,52	75	60,00	15	44,12
Female	295	51,48	50	40,00	19	55,88
Together	573	100,00	125	100	34	100,00
Age						
16-17	17	2,97	6	4,80	0	0,00
18-24	71	12,39	19	15,20	10	29,42
25-29	84	14,66	28	22,40	7	20,59
30-34	53	9,25	12	9,60	4	11,76
35-39	70	12,22	9	7,20	1	2,94
40-44	55	9,60	4	3,20	1	2,94
45-49	44	7,68	14	11,20	7	20,59
50-54	47	8,20	14	11,20	2	5,88
55-59	45	7,85	11	8,80	1	2,94
60+	87	15,18	8	6,40	1	2,94
Together	573	100,00	125	100,00	34	100,00

Source: own

The data were evaluated by selected mathematical-statistical methods at the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$. In order to comprehensively evaluate the issue, we will compare our findings with the results of studies of selected theorists.

4. Results

We found that 22.9% of respondents participated in volunteer tourism in the period under review (2013 to 2018). Up to 95.4% of them stated that they were visitors to domestic volunteer tourism, a quarter of them admitted to foreign experience (Table 2).

Table 2. Participation in volunteer tourism between 2013 and 2018

Participation in volunteer tourism	Number of respondents		% of Slovak population (statistical induction)
	No.	In %	
Outside of Slovakia	34	25,95**	4-8
Within the country	125	95,42**	18-25
Together	131	22,86*	19-26

Note: *Percentage of respondents who participated in the survey

** share of respondents who participated as volunteer

Source: own

The most visited countries were in Europe (91.2% of respondents with foreign experience), followed by Asia (8.8%), South America (5.8%), North America (2.9%) and Africa (2.9%). We note that the voluntary tourism of the Slovak population is aimed at helping third parties almost exclusively in developed countries. After generalization, we can say that in the period under review, 19-26% of the Slovak population participated in volunteer tourism (in average 3-4% a year), with a larger proportion showing interest in domestic rather than outgoing volunteer tourism.

Available studies on volunteering activities in Slovakia (without the link to tourism) also pointed to similar conclusions. While the European Union survey (Volunteering in the European Union 2010) ranks Slovakia among the countries with a moderate level of participation of people in volunteering activities (20-29%), the latest national survey on volunteering in Slovakia (Broznanová-Gregorová et al. 2012) found that 27.5% of the population over 15 years of age participated in formal volunteering. However, it is necessary to note that in our survey we asked respondents about the time period of the last years (2013-2018). Obviously, volunteer tourism is less sought after than volunteering.

68.2% of respondents indicated that they would participate in volunteer tourism in the future with a 64.9% preference for domestic volunteer tourism and 33.5% for foreign countries. After generalizing the results of the sample to the Slovak population, we can say with 95% reliability that 64-72% of the Slovak population showed interest in voluntary tourism, while 61-69% would stay in Slovakia and 30-37% would travel abroad.

4.1 Profile of visitors

We were interested in whether participation in volunteer tourism is differentiated in terms of socio-demographic characteristics of individuals. Many studies have shown that, from a demographic perspective, young people between the ages of 18 and 25 are the most frequent participants in volunteer tourism, with women (70%) being more involved than men (Wearing 2001; Tourism Research and Marketing 2008). Our analysis revealed a lack of dominance of women in outbound tourism, which corresponds to the results of previous studies, but domestic tourism was dominated by men. At the same time, the representation of the young generation is not as pronounced as expected (Table 1). Indeed, young travellers are now refusing to limit the impersonal and non-interactive system of mass tourism and to a varying extent express their attitude towards the social and environmental problems of society. They are more interested in environmental activities, local products and services, gaining new experiences, self-realization and experimentation that reflect their preference for the authenticity of the travel experience. There is a true positive attitude to diversity, flexibility and a strong desire to get to know the local communities, according to Moscardo & Benckendorff (2010) with Generation Y expressing interest in volunteer tourism activities.

When generalizing the results to the population, Phi did not show a relationship between gender and participation in domestic volunteer tourism ($p > 0.05$). In contrast, Spearman's correlation coefficient showed a weak indirect dependence of participation in domestic volunteer tourism from age ($r_s = -0.172$; $p = 0.001$) and a slight direct dependence on the highest achieved education of individuals ($r_s = 0.143$; $p = 0.001$). It means that the participation of Slovak inhabitants in this type of tourism decreased slightly with increasing age. On the contrary, with increasing education of the population their participation increased slightly. The reason may be that up to 36.3% of the surveyed group are students. They have a more free time compared to higher age categories. In this younger age group, people are looking for their place in society and opportunities for self-realization. Having a job or starting a family in old age reduces their free time significantly. Increasing age also affects the health of the population, which significantly affects their leisure activities. This was also confirmed by the respondents' views in the questionnaire survey. When comparing the results of our survey with the study of volunteering in Slovakia (Broznanová-Gregorová, et. al. 2012), we conclude that these results are unique for this type of tourism.

When examining the relationship between participation in volunteer tourism abroad and gender, the highest educational attainment of the respondents did not confirm the statistical significance of the obtained results ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the results presented are specific to the study population and cannot be generalized. On the contrary, the relationship between participation in volunteer tourism abroad, age and economic status of respondents proved to be statistically significant. The Spearman test found that there was a low indirect correlation between responder participation and age ($r_s = -0.155$; $p = 0.001$). The Cramer V test showed a weak relationship between the economic status of the population and participation in volunteer tourism abroad ($c_v = 0.164$; $p = 0.009$). We can therefore state that the participation of volunteer tourism abroad has decreased noticeably with the growing age of Slovak citizens.

Existing studies (Wearing 2001; Tourism Research and Marketing 2008) have also shown that, from a demographic perspective, volunteer tourism is predominant among the young. Holmes & Smith (2009) show similar results when analysing previous surveys. However, they note that older volunteer participants are an equally important segment, in particular in volunteer tourism, leisure travel and volunteer travel (Holmes & Smith 2009). In the 35-45 age category, which can be described as the second most important target group, families with children appear to be a growing segment in terms of family status, and employee volunteering is at the forefront of economic status. This is evidenced by the wide range of volunteer tourism projects of well-known broadcasting organizations (e.g. International VolunteerHQ, United Planet, Global Vision International, Camps International). The third target group in the foreign volunteer tourism market is the elderly over 50 years of age (Stoddart & Rogerson 2004). Thanks to the available free time and experience they have become a target group for such organizations as International VolunteerHQ, Peace Crops, Projects Abroad, Global Vision International, Love Volunteers and so on.

4.2 Source of information

We investigated from what channel of communication respondents learned about opportunities to participate in volunteer tourism activities (Table 3).

Table 3. Sources of information on volunteer tourism

Source of information		Domestic volunteer tourism				Outbound volunteer tourism			
		N	%*	N	%	N	%*	N	%
Direct source	- from friends/acquaintances	89	43,63			17	50,00		
	- from a family member	31	15,20			5	14,71		
	- at school, lectures, or in class	12	5,88			4	11,76		
	- at school from classmates	7	3,43	154	75,49	1	2,94	229	63,04
	- contact by an organization (church, club, AIESEC, etc.)	7	3,43			2	5,88		
	at work	6	2,94			0	0,00		
	own experience	2	0,98			0	0,00		
Indirect source	- via social network (advert or a post)	17	8,33			6	17,65		
	- searched for information on the internet	16	7,84			5	14,71		
	- read an article about volunteering	7	3,43			5	14,71		
	- own initiative, interested in the field	3	1,47	50	24,51	1	2,94	17	36,96
	- at school; a flyer/poster on the bulletin board	2	0,98			0	0,00		
	- from television; a show about volunteering	2	0,98			0	0,00		
	- from internet advertising	2	0,98			0	0,00		
	- from radio; a programme about volunteering	1	0,49			0	0,00		
Together				204	100,00		100,00	46	100,00

Note: Respondents had the opportunity to make multiple responses. The sum of the answers is therefore higher than the number of respondents who participated in voluntary tourism.

* share in the number of participants in domestic/outbound volunteer tourism

Source: own

The key channel of communication was friends and acquaintances. Despite the current trends in marketing communications, the Internet as the most popular interactive medium of the present, was a less important source of information. In both domestic and outgoing volunteer tourism as direct sources dominated. It is therefore essential that volunteer tourism organizations seek to capitalize on the experience and satisfaction of existing visitors in order to gain new ones.

Travel blogs and video blogs (vlogs) are considered as a relatively low-cost resource linking personal experience with the Internet. Vlogs, provide an authentic form of presenting volunteer experience in languages close to the younger generation. They are a source of personal experiences and advice that have a high motivational character. Volunteer tourism organizations can use vlogs to present volunteer activities (experiences, emotions, results of volunteer activities) as a form of summary and regular presentation of events, or to present new volunteer activities in the organization's offer. Although the inserts are popular mainly on the YouTube platform, we consider other social networks that have a significant motivational and informative role in the dissemination of e-WOM. As claim Vetráková et al. (2018), in Slovakia, 89% of generation Z (born after 1995), 67% of generation Y (born 1966–1979), and 53% of the generation X (born before 1979) use social networks every day.

Nowadays, when there is no doubt that innovation is synonymous with success, it is crucial to take advantage of all opportunities to focus more accurately on the right group of people (Štefko et al. 2019). It is also appropriate to explore potential participants in their natural environment - at school and at the workplace. Exchange of experiences, authenticity of narration, engagement, stories and emotions represent the strengths of direct communication of the target groups. Crowd enthusiasm from a good presentation can support a students' decision to engage in volunteer activities. One example of good practice is the Marathon BB (Marathon BB) organizers, who in March 2019 started to address pupils and students of secondary schools and universities in Banská Bystrica.

4.3 Themes

Motivation is one of the most frequently explored areas not only in tourism but also in volunteering. It changes with the influence of current world events, changes in lifestyle and values of society. Respondents in domestic tourism are most motivated by the altruistic motive of helping others (59.0%), but at the same time, volunteer tourism is an opportunity for them to gain new experiences (49.6%) and bring them a sense of usefulness (33.1%). 29.1% of respondents did not mention volunteering in their home country would be more affordable for them (Table 4).

We evaluated the results with Friedman's and Wilcoxon's tests so that we could apply them to the entire set. The Friedman test ($F = 268.1$; $p = 0.001$) ranked the motives in a similar order to the average value, with the only difference being in the first and second place. A subsequent Wilcoxon test of statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) confirmed this arrangement only on three levels (Table 4).

We conclude that the motives found are consistent with the views of Holmes et al. (2010) and Mody et al. (2014), according to which participants in domestic volunteer tourism are motivated by the desire to enjoy the environment, meet other volunteers, gain new experiences and they see their service as a meaningful use of free time.

Participation in domestic volunteer tourism is mainly influenced by volunteering motives. The Friedman test ($F = 19.2$; $p = 0.001$) as well as the Wilcoxon test ($p = 0.001$) confirmed these conclusions and determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the motives examined (Table 4).

Table 4. Motives for participation in domestic volunteer tourism

Main motives	Partial motives ^a	Average value ^b	Rank ^d	Average ranking (Friedman) ^c	P-value (Wilcoxon signed ranks test ^d)
Tourism-specific motives	more affordable travel	3,10	3	1,69	0,00000015
	safe destination	2,92	3		
	no language barrier or cultural shock	2,70	3		
	enjoying free time with friends	2,15	2		
	getting new experiences	1,65	1		
Volunteering-specific motives	I feel it is important to help others	1,61	1	1,31	
	giving back to society	2,21	2		
	sense of usefulness	1,68	1		
	opportunity to use and develop their work skills	2,13	2		
	people I know do volunteer work	2,60	3		
	getting new contacts and friendships	1,90	1		

^aThe questionnaire items report agreement [on a scale of 1 (Extremely likely) to 5 (Extremely unlikely)].

^bDescriptive statistic shows results only for the researched file.

^cTo generalize results for Slovak population, Friedman test was used. It compares the mean ranks between the related groups and indicates how the groups differed.

^dAs Friedman test does not express if there are statistical differences between the researched items (mean rank values), the Wilcoxon test were used to express this. The significance values produced by SPSS Statistics were manually compared. At the p<0.05 significance level, only three ranks were statistically significantly different.

Source: own

The structure of volunteer motives differs slightly from the survey of motivation of volunteers in Slovakia (Brozmanová-Gregorová et al. 2012), although the most important motive (values) is the same. We consider the comparison of motivation of volunteers and participants of domestic volunteer tourism as another possibility of future research.

More than three-quarters (76.4%) of the participants of outbound volunteer tourism are motivated by the opportunity to gain new experience (Table 5). Most (73.5% of respondents) perceived outbound volunteer tourism as an opportunity to meet new societies and to learn about foreign cultures and thus to gain contacts and friendships. More than half (64.7%) of respondents cited a third important altruistic motive of helping others. The least significant reason for volunteering abroad (8.8%) was the idea that people in their neighbourhood have also done this.

We note that participation in outbound volunteer tourism is, from the point of view of respondents, influenced mostly by motives of typical for tourism. The Friedman test ($F = 6.5$; $p < 0.05$) as well as the Wilcoxon test ($p < 0.05$) confirmed these conclusions and determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the travel and volunteer motives in the study. Our findings correspond to the conclusions of Wearing (2001) and Zahra (2011), who state that participants in foreign volunteer tourism, unlike volunteers, expect meaningful travel experiences.

Table 5. Motives for participation in outbound volunteering tourism

Main motives	Partial motives ^a	Average value ^b	Rank ^d	Average ranking (Friedman) ^c	P-value (Wilcoxon signed ranks test ^d)
Motives typical for tourism	travel and discovery of new areas of the world	1,74	1	1,29	0,017
	gaining new experiences	1,32	1		
	meeting local people and learning about foreign cultures	1,44	1		
	to learn more about myself	1,91	2		
	enjoying free time with friends	1,97	2		
Motives typical for volunteers	I feel it is important to help others	1,50	1	1,71	
	giving back to society	2,09	3		
	sense of usefulness	1,53	1		
	opportunity to use and develop their work skills	1,56	1		
	people I know do volunteer work	3,15	3		
	getting new contacts and friendships	1,94	2		

^aThe questionnaire items report agreement [on a scale of 1 (Extremely likely) to 5 (Extremely unlikely)].

^bDescriptive statistic shows results only for the researched file.

^cTo generalize results for Slovak population, Friedman test was used. It compares the mean ranks between the related groups and indicates how the groups differed.

^dAs Friedman test does not express if there are statistical differences between the researched items (mean rank values), the Wilcoxon test were used to express this. The significance values produced by SPSS Statistics were manually compared. At the p<0.05 significance level, only three ranks were statistically significantly different.

Source: own

4.4. Obstacles to participation

Respondents who were not interested in volunteering tourism were offered statements pointing out possible barriers to participation. These can be based on the personal attitudes of individuals, while also reflecting the cultural, social, economic or social impact of the external environment.

Many respondents consider the lack of time (61.1%) as a major obstacle in domestic volunteer tourism, which was in line with the views of many researchers (Holmes 2008; Trafford Council 2011; Human & Van Graan 2013). There is also a significant lack of interest in volunteering (40.9%). It was expressed by respondents who do not have volunteering experience (35.6%), but also by those who already have volunteering experience (5.4%). One third of respondents (32.2%) are not interested in such travel in Slovakia and approximately the same share of respondents (30.2%) are lacking information on opportunities to participate. Fear of participation was the least cited obstacle to participation (25.5%).

With increasing age ($r_s = 0.488$; $p < 0.001$) and decreasing education ($r_s = -0.226$; $p = 0.006$), the perception of leisure time is more sensitive especially for employed respondents. In the other obstacles examined, the relationship with the highest educational attainment and the current economic status of respondents proved to be significant. Secondary school residents especially prefer a different kind of traveling in Slovakia, they are more afraid that they do not have sufficient experience to carry out volunteering activities and are assessing the financial and distance aspects of volunteer tourism.

Similarly, the lack of time (53.0% of respondents) is the most important obstacle to participation in volunteering in outbound tourism. With increasing age ($r_s = 0.450$; $p < 0.001$) and decreasing education ($r_s = -0.247$; $p < 0.001$) this obstacle proved to be more significant. It is equally important in relation to the economic status of the population ($r_{cv} = 0.304$; $p < 0.001$). The lack of time is particularly felt by employed individuals. We consider this

result logical and justified. Nowadays, it is characterized mainly by the accelerating pace in all areas of life and the pressure of society to do the best possible in everything. Individuals thus review their activities and subsequent priorities, especially in relation to time. Other barriers based primarily on the nature of traveling abroad include the distance of the project organization, activity or event (37.3%) and the language barrier (39.1%). Another important obstacle is the lack of awareness among citizens about the possibilities to participate in this type of tourism (29.1%). Sending volunteer organizations should reflect this by targeting their marketing activities.

5. Discussion

Volunteer tourism often intersects with non-volunteer tourism as the efforts of volunteers make attraction to events and places possible. As previously mentioned with the example of the Banská Bystrica marathon, many cultural events rely on volunteers to make these organized activities possible. Volunteers can be a part of large and important events (e.g. The Beijing Olympics - half a million volunteers, Vancouver – 29.5 thousand, London - 60 thousand, Sochi – 25 thousand volunteers), but also events with national, regional or local significance. Volunteers of organized events can be distinguished as so-called core team volunteers, who perform operational tasks necessary to ensure the event. Examples from Slovakia include the Nitra Festival, Pohoda and Uprising Reggae Festival where volunteers play a major role in planning and organizing events in the regions.

Another important role of volunteer tourism is the reversal of neglect of historical objects that have significant cultural value. It would be amiss to not point out some Slovak volunteer tourism projects of the preservation variety and in this regard, we have chosen three projects where the gains from the efforts of volunteers have been incalculable in terms of benefit to society:

- Čierny Hron narrow gauge railway- This railway was used in the forest industry up until 1982 and then abandoned. From 1992, volunteers have been refurbishing and maintaining a 17 km stretch of the railroad between Chvatimech and Čierny Balog. Today, it is a popular tourist attraction during the summer months. It still incorporates volunteers for track and equipment maintenance.
- Pustý Hrad- a 13-century castle ruin that is situated on top of a hill overlooking the city of Zvolen. Much of this castle was overgrown until more recently. Since 2009, ongoing archaeological research with the help of volunteers has been carried out with renovation of sections of walls giving visitors a sense of scale to what once was a very large castle. Today it is a very popular hiking destination and offers an excellent view of the city of Zvolen and its surrounding area.
- Kalvária Banská Štiavnica- This is one of the largest Calvary hills in Europe and was created in the late Baroque style from 1744-1751. It consists of 3 churches and 22 chapels (Stations of the Cross). The complex was damaged in World War II and repairs were attempted even during the time of socialism, but the biggest damage came during the period of 1989-2004 when negligence and vandals did untold destruction to the monuments. In 2007, this complex was listed on the 100 most endangered monuments of the world. Since this time, most of the structures have been renovated to their past glory, much of it with the help of volunteers who come from all over the world.

In all three of the above cases, the efforts from volunteer tourism have helped to save important cultural artefacts. With their preservation, these sites have now become actual tourist destinations in themselves creating economic benefits for the local citizens, not just cultural ones.

Throughout Slovakia, there exist many cultural objects that could be targeted for volunteer tourism. This is especially true of the rural areas where these objects can be found in abundance. This is unlike the urban centres where historical monuments have already been preserved or snapped up by investors and thus their potential for this form of activity has been removed. Sadly, many cultural monuments in Slovakia are in a state of disrepair or

abandonment. This even includes the monuments that are on the official list of culturally protected artefacts. It needs to be said that the official cultural list does not even cover all objects that are culturally significant, such as abandoned train stations, industrial equipment, and older buildings. Often, it is the organization of a volunteer initiative that is the first step to having a historic objects added to the list of culturally protected artefacts. Once restored, these artefacts could serve as a tourist draw to the municipality.

Conclusions

The pervasion of volunteering with tourism has created a new dimension. A need to travel, during free time being in a different place as is habitual residence for purpose of perception, diversion and amusement, cultural and sporting enjoyment has added to visitor's need to be useful in the visited destination. Volunteer tourism is thus result of a combination of individual interest and desire of visitors to help others through volunteering, which has a positive impact on society, environment and economic background. Voluntarism has become a sought activity in tourism, same on supply as demand. In practice, volunteer tourism has several forms.

The purpose was to examine and evaluate a demand of Slovak inhabitants older than 15 years for domestic and outbound volunteer tourism. We have considered the Slovak inhabitants who have taken part at least once in voluntary activity of domestic or outbound volunteer tourism in Slovakia during survey period (from 2013 to 2018).

Between 2013 and 2018, 19-26% of the Slovak population participated in voluntary tourism; whereas a larger share (18-25) showed interest in domestic rather than outgoing volunteer tourism (4-8%). The voluntary tourism of the inhabitants of Slovakia is focused on aid almost exclusively in developed countries. With increasing age, participation in this type of tourism decreases, while participation in the home country is positively influenced by higher education. Participation abroad also depends on the economic status of the individual.

While participation in domestic volunteer tourism is largely influenced by volunteer-oriented motives, in the case of outbound tourism, tourism-oriented motives dominate. In the home country, due to its size, volunteers often do not realize that they are involved in tourism as the primary incentive is to provide assistance. Abroad, the expectation of a travel experience is evident.

A peculiarity of the national volunteer tourism of the inhabitants of Slovakia is that key information is obtained mainly from direct sources (friends, acquaintances, relatives, classmates, etc.). Their predominance in the case of domestic tourism is more evident. We consider social networks successful in the dissemination of e-Word-of-Mouth as well as lectures at schools as a suitable communication channel for the dissemination of information for young people who represent the largest target group of volunteer tourism.

Time is the most important obstacle to people's participation in volunteer tourism. This is one of the reasons why short-term volunteering activities are currently offered as part of the travel experience, whether in the home country or abroad. We can find an example of good practice from abroad with hotel co-operation with non-profit organizations, allowing guests of accommodation facilities to engage in volunteer activities at a destination instead of traditional leisure activities. At the same time, it is also possible to contribute to the sustainable development of the visited destination during excursions (e.g. to help restore cultural attractions during their visit).

The analysis points to the assumption that there can be benefits in attracting and managing participants, as well as in the development of products for domestic and outgoing volunteer tourism. In particular, cooperation between sending and coordinating organizations and beneficiary organizations and a more intensive campaign in relation

to raising awareness of the benefits and opportunities for participation in this type of sustainable tourism should contribute to the development of volunteer tourism in Slovakia.

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Acknowledgement

This research is supported by the VEGA project no. V-18-101-07-101312: Abandoned Slovakia: Effective solutions to the creative reuse of abandoned properties in non-urban areas.



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

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