

## **Global global, acting local: Are volunteer tourists prospective community builders?**

In the growing field of volunteer tourism research, studies have investigated participant motivations and the benefits accruing to both travellers and the community, as well as undertaking critical assessments of the phenomenon. Comparatively little attention has been paid to changes associated with the post-volunteer period and particularly to the likelihood of volunteer tourists making contributions within their home communities. Using the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP), this study explores the impacts of the volunteer tourism experience on the intentions of volunteer tourists to undertake other variants of volunteering post-trip. The expectations of respondents and their volunteering disconfirmations were measured over the course of travel using a two-round online survey to study the effects of these constructs on respondent intentions to volunteer in their home communities. No strong evidence was found that volunteer tourism acts as a recruitment medium for future volunteering. The research concludes by restating the unresolved question of whether the weak links between volunteer tourism and home community volunteering symptomatise the shallowness of a phenomenon that benefits the privileged or whether volunteer tourism provides a genuine mechanism for developing global citizens who think global and act local.

Keywords: volunteer tourism; global citizens; cosmopolitanism

### **Introduction**

The connectedness of contemporary technology-enabled interactions transcends identities based around national boundaries and has accelerated the growth of global citizenship (Urry, 2013). Increasingly globalised communications and commerce have prompted greater economic, social and environmental interdependencies (Breacher, Childs, & Cutler, 1993; Waddock & Smith, 2000), resulting in increasing concerns about social justice and rights, and fears surrounding cultural conflict (Davies, 2006). Growing youth consciousness about the importance of cross-cultural interactions and of the ‘other’ through the massification of higher education is

sometimes used as justification for undertaking volunteer tourism. Through the eyes of potential travellers, volunteer tourism holds out the prospect of exploring the world in its diversity, while benefiting host communities with contributions that can include community development, scientific research and environmental repair (Wearing, 2001).

The prospect of volunteering overseas has been promoted as a challenge to the prevalence of narcissism in the modern world and to mobilise contributions to overseas communities by volunteer tourists as a cohort of global citizens. Despite its purported benefits to global citizenship and cosmopolitanism (Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011), the promoters of volunteer tourism have been criticised for overstating its contributions (Lyons, Hanley, Wearing, & Neil, 2012). It has been argued that participants are more interested in contributing within remote and sometimes exotic locations than showing concern for their home communities. A global citizen should be inclined to contribute to communities overseas as well as back home. To date, little research has explored the relationship between volunteering overseas and locally, and this knowledge gap deserves exploration, particularly as the outcomes of volunteer tourism programs may impact on developments within the respective host and home communities. This study addresses the knowledge gap by using the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP) to examine how volunteer tourism trips influence tourist intentions to volunteer within their home communities. The findings will be considered in light of volunteer tourist contributions to global citizenship.

## **Literature review**

The volunteer tourism phenomenon commonly involves individual ‘volunteer tourists’ who fund their own travel with the aim of building community capacities and improving environments.

The intended beneficiaries of volunteer projects are commonly known as ‘host communities’ and

the term 'sending organisation' is commonly ascribed to an organising agency. These major volunteer tourism stakeholder groups are involved in diverse activities ranging from educating the host community and assisting the construction of shelters, to restoring structures of cultural significance and undertaking research work (Wearing, 2001).

The volunteer tourism concept relies on a balance between the enjoyment of tourism as a form of relaxation, exploration and learning with creating positive impacts for beneficiary communities. Primarily motivated by altruism (Coghlan & Fennell, 2009), other volunteer tourism stimuli include the opportunity to visit exotic locales (Lyons & Wearing, 2008; Sin, 2010), cross-cultural learning (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007), social capital acquisition (Brown, 2005) and building skills (Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004). Meanwhile self-development has emerged as a key motivator for travelling away from the mainstream for adventure and risk-taking purposes (Wearing, Grabowski, & Small, 2015). The debate about motivations continues to centre on whether participants are altruistic or self-interested.

The dualism inherent in volunteer tourism divides experiencing the pleasures of seeing the world and of contributing. Participation may offer a convenient way of assuaging the guilt that is often associated with privilege, levelling the advantages afforded by historical power imbalances through the 'haves' bringing benefits to the 'have-nots' (Sin, 2010). This largely positive interpretation presupposes that cross-cultural interactions and global citizenship are opportunities to counter intolerance (Lyons, et al., 2012). It would be presumptuous to think that volunteer tourism is free of deleterious effects on either the travellers themselves or on the communities that host them. If they are to acquire a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, volunteer tourism researchers need to take account of both its advantages and its disadvantages. After the 'cheerleading' tenor of the early volunteer tourism literature, more recent work has

placed greater emphasis on critical aspects (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Recent criticisms include the neglect of local wishes, impeding the progress of work, interfering with local economies, exploiting vulnerable community members, poverty rationalisation, the demonstration effect and privileging the elite (Biddle, 2014; Guttentag, 2009; Lyons, et al., 2012; Palacios, 2010; Sin, 2010; Tourism Concern, 2014). Cautionary tales have fuelled negative sentiment about volunteer tourism, prompting criticism that its idealistic vision of mutual benefits is unrealistic, and that benefits flow disproportionately to tourists rather than to host communities (Lyons, et al., 2012).

The volunteer tourism literature has focused on both the growing uptake of the phenomenon and on the trip experience itself. However, few researchers have examined volunteer tourism once the trip is over, despite the centrality of this phase to the longer term sustainability of volunteer tourism outcomes (Knollenberg, McGehee, Boley, & Clemmons, 2014). Some have concluded that returning volunteer tourists exhibit heightened openness and civic attitudes (Bailey & Russell, 2010; McGehee, 2002; McGehee & Norman, 2002; McGehee & Santos, 2005). Alexander (2009) found that returned volunteer tourists exhibit greater confidence and assertiveness, and Lee and Yen (2015) identified heightened repeat purchase intentions. Various researchers have advocated for the importance of returning volunteer tourists reflecting on and making sense of their experience, thereby transforming their perspectives on global poverty (Hammersley, 2013; Mostafanezhad, 2014). It has also been argued that such reflections may lower the incidence of re-entry shock, thereby reducing the unsettled feeling that 'home' is unfamiliar after time spent overseas (Grabowski & Wearing, 2008, 2010). The resultant heightening of civic attitudes, increasing confidence and assertiveness, and transformed

perspective may propel or motivate returned volunteer tourists to contribute to their home communities.

In considering the outcomes of volunteer tourism beyond the period of the experience itself and understanding its wider implications, it is timely to explore the post-return phase. There is merit in extending beyond project-related impacts when examining the prospective impacts on both the self and on communities, because these potential insights might counteract cynicism about this form of travel. The present investigation seeks to assess whether the critique of volunteer tourism as self-serving and making minimal contributions to society beyond the trip is warranted. The longer term prospects for volunteer tourism will depend on its continuing relevance to beneficiary communities and to volunteer tourists alike (Ong, Lockstone-Binney, King, & Smith, 2014). If it can be shown that volunteer tourism prompts or motivates participants to continue engaging in volunteer activity upon return, positive public perceptions of its utility for on-going community participation in the form of volunteering for home and global causes might be boosted.

### ***The rise of global citizenship in tourism***

The concept of global citizenship is characterised as a cohort who are aware of differences in the world and play an active role in accepting and celebrating cultural diversity and human rights (Davies 2006; Lyons, et al., 2012). Given this focus, global citizenship may sometimes clash with prevailing tourism practices, which have been criticised for commoditising cultural practices (Lyons, et al. 2012). The global citizenship concept has been increasingly incorporated within emergent tourism forms that incorporate measures to counteract the potentially damaging impact of tourism on host cultures (Butcher & Smith, 2010; Lyons, et al., 2012).

In analysing the volunteer tourist experience, it is evident that participants tend to prioritise higher order motivational needs such as self-esteem and fulfilment (Poon, 1993; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Volunteer tourism has been regarded as media for such ‘life politics’, where individuals’ values are expressed through consumption and lifestyle choices. For example, individuals may opt for ethical consumption because it is consistent with their pursuit of morally responsible lifestyles (Butcher & Smith, 2012). This resonates with the rising consumer trend to co-opt resources as an extension of the self, notably when purchasing goods or services that are congruent with one’s actual or aspirational self-image (Schau, 2000). The growing tendency to mix other interests with travel, as in the case of special interest tourism, is manifested in co-creation of the tourism experience by tourists and locals, with the inclusion of authentic and local-led elements (Binkhorst, 2009). Such approaches reinforce the current researchers’ view that volunteer tourism attaches priority to self-expression. The present paper tracks the behavioural intentions towards forms of global citizen action that flow from volunteer tourist experiences.

The pervasiveness of politics through individual lives is also evident through changing tourism consumption patterns, which are a reaction to the negative connotations of contemporary materialist consumer behaviours. Materialism is often associated with the purchase of products which bestow status on the consumer (Goldsmith & Clark, 2012), thereby encouraging consumers to be status-conscious and to engage in associated buying behaviours. As consumption has graduated from physical goods to services and experiences, status-bearing qualities have extended from tangible materialism to intangible representations of status. In the contemporary experience-focused economy, conspicuous consumption often takes the form of quality consumption, and in the case of tourism, involves appropriating culturally valued

products that signal wealth (Shipman, 2004). The assault on alleged materialism has affected how consumers view their personal consumption (Ger & Belk, 1999), with some seeking to distance themselves from the materialist paradigm by consciously avoiding choices that lead to elevated status. In the case of volunteer tourism, the choice to participate may reflect one's moral priorities when pursuing altruism in tandem with personal enjoyment.

Social justice is a key tenet to global citizenship – it places responsibility on consumers to ensure that they avoid living a better life at the expense of undermining the lives of others (Wringe, 1999). Related to this tenet is the increased visibility of the disadvantaged or 'others', who exist beyond the individual, prompting guilt and a heightened sense of social responsibility amongst more affluent consumers. The juxtaposition of 'haves' and 'have-nots' within the volunteer tourism phenomenon has prompted questions about its appropriateness (Mustonen, 2007; Sin, 2010). Volunteer tourism has been criticised for being a kind of 'whitewashing' that does not truly expose participants to the real challenges of host communities, sometimes excusing the effects of poverty with the view that circumstances would be mitigated if host communities could find more joy in the everyday (Guttentag, 2009). Without considering the merits of such observations, the prevailing sense of guilt that is often associated with awareness about privileged circumstances has undoubtedly prompted consumption practices that soothe the conscience (Cherrier, 2007; Micheletti & Stolle, 2008), constituting a kind of cosmopolitan empathy that responds to the plight of the poor (Mostafanezhad, 2014).

The concept of social justice is also central to discussions about volunteer tourist motivations. One consequence of technological advances has been the widespread availability of the internet and social media tools. Such tools have provided an opportunity for the massification of online activism (Rotman et al., 2011). Through signing online petitions that support political

causes or changing profile pictures on social media in support of worthy social causes, the accessibility of online activism has greatly widened the activist base. This wider audience has also been associated with growing consciousness of international causes (Micheletti & Stolle, 2008). However, easy participation has prompted scepticism about the effectiveness of such campaigns, given the passivity of participants (Walsh, 2012). The critique has prompted the use of the pejorative term, 'slacktivism'. This word conveys a sense of disapproval towards adoption by the 'online generation' of the term 'activism', which implies activity – to an essentially passive medium that is disassociated with direct involvement (Rotman, et al., 2011; Tatarchevskiy, 2011). Volunteer tourism shares the idealism and good intentions of online petitions, and supplements this ethical alignment with greater active participation (Ong, et al., 2014). Volunteer tourists participate in activities which are, ideally, designed to benefit the neediest in the host community. Furthermore, active participation in overseas volunteering allows participants to acquire a stronger sense of global citizenship. This may ultimately transcend geographical boundaries with the manifestation of an equivalent sense of social justice in their home communities as in their contributions to volunteer tourism host communities.

The argument that less developed communities overseas are more deserving of assistance than the home communities of volunteer tourists is not a convincing justification for a lesser commitment to home community volunteering. In exploring the identities of global citizenry and the meaning of contributing to the world beyond benefits to the self, it is important to consider home community volunteering as a component of global citizenship. The expression of home community volunteering takes a variety of forms – notably mutual aid, philanthropy, participation and advocacy (Davis Smith, 2000). Such heterogeneity has features in common with the concept of global citizenship: namely a concern with social justice, cultural diversity

and human rights (Davies 2006; Lyons, et al., 2012). When they are viewed from this perspective, the phenomena of overseas and home community volunteering are “two sides of the (same) global citizenship values coin”.

Growing awareness about global citizenship and increasing technology-enabled connectedness have provided an opportunity to reassess the community development achievements of international development programs (Diprose, 2012; Mostafanezhad, 2014). Heightened awareness offers the prospect of positive contributions to home communities and to international development (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Ideally, a positive volunteer tourism experience that fulfils expectations can prompt participants to embrace other forms of activism, enacting global citizenship in home communities and for global causes (Convery & Kerr, 2007), a central assumption of the present study.

### ***Volunteer tourism research directions***

From the foregoing literature, it is evident that a deeper understanding is needed of **volunteer tourist expectations**, in their capacities as both tourists and as volunteers. Such awareness might stimulate more consistent and frequent participation and a propensity to encourage others, whether visiting a destination or volunteering for events and causes. This, in turn, may encourage further community involvement and bonding through home community volunteering, thus facilitating the social bonds that may positively affect physical and mental health amongst the wider population (Wilson, 2012). Delving into the impact of volunteer tourism on post-return volunteering intentions also provides insights into the contributions that such trips make towards sustainable global citizenship.

## **Method**

In the present study, EDP was adopted as the lens with which to explore whether volunteer tourism can have the potential to translate into home community community volunteering following the return home of volunteer tourists (Oliver, 2010). According to EDP, expectations form a baseline for the measurement of disconfirmation through the fulfilment or disappointment of such expectations (Oliver, 1980). Within this paradigm, disconfirmation may be measured in two ways: inferred and/or direct. The inferred approach tracks the differences between expectations and evaluations of performance (Meyer & Westerbarkey, 1996), whereas the direct approach uses a summary judgment of respondents in measuring confirmation/disconfirmation, with options such as 'better than expected' and 'worse than expected' used to represent their confirmation/disconfirmation (Prakash & Loundsbury, 1993). The direct method was preferred for the conduct of the present study because the inferred approach focusses exclusively on initial expectations as a way of understanding performance and fails to consider changing expectations. When undertaking the direct method the researcher is not required to undertake calculations, thereby reducing opportunities for error (Danaher & Haddrell, 1996; Prakash & Loundsbury, 1993).

Data were collected in the second phase of a broader research project over two rounds using self-administered online questionnaires to facilitate measurement of the effects of the significant event (Ruspini, 2002; Taris, 2000), namely, the volunteer tourism experience. Initial dissemination was conducted through co-operative sending organisations, with direct dissemination through the subsequent round to respondents via the email addresses that they provided in responding to the first questionnaire. The initial data collection occurred pre-departure, with subsequent administration occurring one to two weeks after the respondents had

returned. Both questionnaires measured respondents' home community volunteering behavioural intentions. In addition, while the pre-departure questionnaire measured expectation variables, the post-return questionnaire measured the corresponding disconfirmation variables. Respondents prior home community volunteering behaviours were also incorporated within the pre-departure questionnaire in order to understand whether intentions to participate in home community volunteering may be attributed to the effects of their trip or whether they represented a continuation of existing volunteering behaviours (Sommer, 2011).

Five-point Likert-type scales were used to measure respondents' agreement with the applicable expectation and disconfirmation statements (de Vaus, 2013). The expectation scales in the pre-departure questionnaire ranged from '1 – Strongly disagree' to '5 – Strongly agree', separated by a neutral '3 – Neither agree nor disagree'. In the disconfirmation section of the post-return questionnaire, respondents were asked about how well their expectations were fulfilled in relation to the expectation variables. The five-point scale ranged from '1 – Much worse than expected' to '5 – Much better than expected', with a middle option of '3 – As expected'.

To measure the behavioural intention variables in both questionnaires, respondents were asked to rate the likelihood that they would start or continue home community volunteering within their own communities beyond the trip. This scale was represented by '1 – Extremely unlikely' and '5 – Extremely likely' on opposing ends, with '3 – Neither likely nor unlikely' in the middle. A five-point rating scale was chosen for its simplicity in allowing respondents to express the likelihood of their behavioural intentions positively and negatively, while acknowledging that some would feel more strongly about these intentions than others.

To measure expectations and disconfirmation, it was necessary to express expectations in a way that allowed respondents to reach a quick understanding of the intended meanings. Since this study sought to measure the predictive standards of respondent expectations, the relevant variables were constructed around the phrase 'will be'. To ensure comparability across the pre-departure and post-return data, a post-return disconfirmation variable was created to correspond with each pre-departure expectation variable. Table 1 lists the expectation and disconfirmation variables that were created on the basis of categories of expectation. These categories were derived from the volunteering and tourism literatures, resulting from an extensive review and categorisation of expectations in these two parent fields from an earlier phase of the broader project. While some categories could be expressed with the use of a single item, others were more nuanced and required the representation of a single category using multiple variables.

**Table 1: Categories of expectation and corresponding variables**

Category	Corresponding variables	
	Expectation	Disconfirmation
Accommodation	My accommodation will be comfortable.	My accommodation was comfortable.
Activities	Our volunteer activities will be planned and structured, with all relevant materials and tools provided.	Our volunteer activities were planned and structured, with materials and tools provided for our use.
Destination exploration	I will explore the rest of the country or region, aside from the area in which I am volunteering.	I was able to explore the rest of the country, aside from the area in which I was volunteering.
	I will have opportunities to learn about my host destination's culture.	I had opportunities to learn about my host destination's culture.
Interaction with locals	I will be interacting with host community members (working with them, sharing meals, attending local community events, etc.).	I was able to interact with host community members (working with them, sharing meals, attending host community events, etc.)
Interaction with other participants	I will meet like-minded travellers.	I met like-minded travellers.
Safety	I will be volunteering in a safe environment.	I volunteered in a safe environment.
Skills	I will pick up new skills on this trip.	I picked up new skills on this trip.
	I will practise existing skills on this trip.	I practised existing skills on this trip.
	I will be transferring my knowledge and/or skills to the host community.	I transferred my knowledge and/or skills to the host community.
Support from staff	I will have quick access to assistance should an emergency arise.	I had quick access to assistance in times of emergency.
	The sending organisation will have staff from its Australian office contactable at all times.	The sending organisation had staff from its Australian office contactable at all times.
	The sending organisation will have staff local to my host destination who are contactable at all times.	The sending organisation had staff local to my host destination who were contactable at all times.
	The sending organisation will provide site familiarisation activities, such as understanding the work environment and surroundings.	The sending organisation provided site familiarisation activities, such as understanding the work environment and surroundings.
Meaningful experience	I will contribute to a specific cause on this trip (such as to contribute to environmental conservation or to	I fulfilled a specific cause on this trip (such as contributing to environmental conservation or

	make a positive contribution to social justice, etc.)	making a positive contribution to social justice, etc.)
	I will fulfil my personal goal of helping others.	I fulfilled my personal goal of helping others.
	I will be able to witness how my volunteer work benefits the host community.	I witnessed how my volunteer work benefitted the host community.
Personal growth and learning	This trip will transform my identity.	This trip transformed my identity.
	I will find inspiration for my life goals on this trip.	I found inspiration for my life goals on this trip.
	This trip will change my perspective of the world around me.	This trip changed my perspective of the world around me.

The pre-departure questionnaire included a measurement of respondents’ existing home community volunteer activities. The definition of home community volunteering that was used in the questionnaire was “Unpaid activities undertaken to contribute to your local community in Australia”. Respondents were subsequently asked about whether they had undertaken home community volunteering during the previous year. These responses were categorised into ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ for the purpose of this study.

Since a multi-staged approach was adopted, there was a risk of attrition between each round (Boys et al., 2003). To mitigate this risk, an increased number of respondents was sought during the initial, pre-departure round. This approach recognised that some of the initial respondents would not proceed to participate in the second round (Boys et al., 2003; Taris, 2000). The risk of attrition was exacerbated by the reflective nature of the post-return questionnaire (Cousins, Evans & Sadler, 2009). Frequently presented as a challenge to the beliefs and perspectives of participants, the volunteer tourism experience can be an intensely personal one, demanding that participants take time to become acquainted with their transformed perspectives (Grabowski & Wearing 2008; 2010). Only the passage of time could mitigate such potential attrition.

## Findings

Of the 96 respondents who completed the pre-departure questionnaire, only 40 proceeded to complete the subsequent round. Of these, females (a total of 35) outnumbered their male counterparts by four to one. This is consistent with the strongly female orientation of volunteer tourism participation that has been noted by previous researchers (Andereck, McGehee, Lee, & Clemmons, 2012; GeckoGo, 2009; McGehee, Clemmons, & Lee, 2009). 17 respondents (43%) were under the age of 20, while 16 respondents (40%) were between 20 and 24 years old. Only 7 respondents were 25 years and older. The relative youth of the respondents reflects the typical demographic client profiles serviced by the various sending organisations which assisted with this study. While every effort was made to sample over 30s, the limited number of cooperative sending organisations constrained the researchers' access to this older demographic.

32 respondents (82%) were from Australia, with the rest originating from New Zealand, China and the USA. Two respondents did not indicate their country of origin. The selection criteria concentrated on sending organisations with a presence in Australia, so it was unsurprising that most respondents were from the Australasian region. It was also unsurprising given the youthfulness of the respondents that 24 of them (60%) identified secondary education as their highest qualification.

It was initially intended that the data collected through two rounds of surveying would be subjected to Multinomial Logistic Regression (MLR) analyses. However, the final respondent number total fell short of the minimum 100 respondents demanded by the proposed MLR analysis with five respondents for each of the 20 variables measured (Hair et al. 2010). Because of the returned size of the data-set, the authors opted to use Mann-Whitney U-tests.

The Mann-Whitney U-test is a non-parametric equivalent to the t-test and identifies differences between two independent groups (Corder & Foreman, 2014). It ranks all response values from 1 to n, where n represents the total number of values in the two groups. The ranks applicable to each group are then averaged and these findings are reported. The p-value estimates the probability that a randomly chosen subject from one population will be more highly ranked than its equivalent from another population. The null hypothesis is expressed as having no tendency for the ranks of one group to be significantly higher or lower than the other ( $H_0$ ). The alternative hypothesis is that the ranks of one group are higher or lower than the other ( $H_1$ ). A small p-value therefore indicates a significant difference between the means for the average rankings of two groups.

In the present study, separate Mann-Whitney U-tests were conducted on the independent variables that were derived from the raw responses to form two levels. Post-return intentions to volunteer with their home communities (BILV<sub>2</sub>) were recoded into Positive (5 - Strongly agree/4 - Agree) and Negative (1 - Strongly disagree/2 - Disagree). The neutral response variable (3 - Neither agree nor disagree) was excluded. As 40 Mann-Whitney U-tests were run, with one test per expectation and disconfirmation variable, only significant test statistics will be detailed in the interest of brevity.

The expectation and disconfirmation variables generally did not yield significant results. It was found that only one disconfirmation variable 'This trip transformed my identity' had response distributions that differed significantly between those with positive intentions to volunteer within their home communities and those who were negatively disposed to do so (Mann-Whitney U = 4.00, Z = -2.064, p < 0.05).

**Table 2: Mann-Whitney U-test Ranks**

	<b>BILV<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>
This trip transformed my identity	Strongly Agree/Agree	27	14.15	382.00
	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	2	26.50	53.00
	Total	29		

Based on results in Table 2, the mean rank for the latter group (26.50) far exceeded what was attributable to the former (14.15). This implies that for this variable those who were unlikely to undertake future home community volunteering, were more likely to indicate that their expectations were positively fulfilled.

A new variable was computed with a view to determining changing behavioural intentions ( $\Delta\text{BILV}$ ) between the pre-departure ( $\text{BILV}_1$ ) and post-return ( $\text{BILV}_2$ ) responses as follows:

$$\Delta\text{BILV} = \text{BILV}_2 - \text{BILV}_1$$

Consistent with the procedures that are associated with the Mann-Whitney U-test, two options were considered when dichotomising this new variable. Negative results were grouped into a single category, while the other consisted of the non-negative results (i.e., positive and zero).

Paired tests were performed to explore whether there were any significant changes in home community volunteering behavioural intention pre- and post-trip. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used (Corder & Foreman, 2014) since it was observed that the distribution of the different behavioural intentions about home community volunteering was symmetrical.

This test used the behavioural intentions reported by each respondent pre- and post-trip to determine whether the median differences between  $\text{BILV}_1$  (pre-departure behavioural intention) and  $\text{BILV}_2$  (post-return behavioural intention) were equal to zero ( $H_0$ ). The alternative

hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was therefore that the median of differences between  $BILV_1$  and  $BILV_2$  was not equal to zero. The confidence interval was set at 95%.

The hypotheses for both the tests were identical, and are expressed as follows:

$$H_0: \text{median difference} = 0$$

$$H_1: \text{median difference} \neq 0$$

Table 3 presents a calculation and ranking of directional changes in behavioural intentions. It details the number of negative and positive ranks, as well as ties, for each pair of behavioural intention responses. ‘Negative Rank’ indicates the number of respondents who reported lower behavioural intentions after their return from travel, relative to their aspirations pre-departure. Each mention of ‘Positive Rank’ represents a respondent who indicated a post-return behavioural intention that exceeded what was expressed pre-departure. The reference to ‘Ties’ indicates that the respondents expressed the same levels of behavioural intentions pre- and post- trip.

**Table 3: The ranking of changes to behavioural intentions to volunteer within their home communities**

		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>
$\Delta BILV = BILV_2 - BILV_1$	<b>Negative Ranks</b>	11	10.32	113.50
	<b>Positive Ranks</b>	9	10.72	96.50
	<b>Ties</b>	20		
	<b>Total</b>	40		

The test statistics that were generated from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test were  $Z = -0.338$  and  $p > 0.05$ . Based on the test statistics, the null hypothesis was accepted. No significant differences were evident in the home community volunteering intentions of respondents pre-departure and post-return.

Aside from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, the computed data on changing behavioural intentions revealed information about whether expectations and disconfirmation with volunteer tourism trips provides a prospective conduit for home community volunteering. Implicit in this motivation was an assumption that positive experiences associated with volunteer tourism would inspire subsequent home community volunteering. It was hoped that an understanding of expectations and disconfirmation would provide sending organisations with ideas about the provision of avenues for continued volunteering that would contribute positively to home community organisations. The computed data tell a different story.

In the calculations presented above (in Table 3), only nine respondents reported a higher likelihood of participating in home community volunteering upon their return, while 11 respondents reported a lesser likelihood. The significant number who reported a lesser likelihood of home community volunteering was obscured in the previous Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The test only generated significant findings in cases where many more respondents ranked positive changes compared to those who ranked negative changes (or vice versa) in their behavioural intentions. The relatively close number of respondents who presented negative and positive ranks in home community volunteering behavioural intentions resulted in the non-significant results in the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, as the effect of each negative rank was annulled by a similar number of positive ranks.

It is worthwhile considering respondents' prior home community volunteer behaviours when examining intentions to engage in such activities upon their return. This contextualises the previous observations relative to respondents' changing home community volunteering behavioural intentions by establishing whether such prior experiences are influential. Table 4

presents results arising from the conduct of a Mann-Whitney U-test with previous experience of home community volunteering as the independent variable.

**Table 4: Ranking of home community volunteering to previous experience**

	<b>Previous experience in home community volunteering (Yes/No)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>
How likely are you to start or continue volunteering in your home community over the next 12 months	No	15	15.43	231.50
	Yes	25	23.54	588.50
	Total	40		

These results indicate higher mean ranks on the part of respondents who had prior experience of home community volunteering (mean rank = 23.54) compared to those who had no prior experience (mean rank = 15.43). The statistically significant result (Mann-Whitney = 111.50,  $Z = -2.254$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates a prospectively positive relationship between prior experience of home community volunteering and future volunteering intentions. This is consistent with the findings of general studies that confirmed the strong influence of past behaviours on future intentions (Sommer, 2011), regardless of an interceding intervention.

The current study was not exclusively concerned with the final behavioural intentions that were expressed by volunteer tourists (BILV<sub>2</sub>), but also with the impact of volunteer tourism trips on changing behavioural intentions ( $\Delta$ BILV). The findings challenge previous assumptions that the experience should act as a springboard for further volunteer participation. It was found that volunteer tourism experiences have an inverse effect on the likelihood that returning volunteer tourists will volunteer in their home communities. Instead of turning participants towards further volunteering activities, the number of respondents who were deterred from home community volunteering exceeded those who were encouraged. Though the current sample size is too small to allow for the generalisation of findings beyond the immediate sample, it opens up

a potentially worthwhile area for future research. A more in-depth understanding of this effect would clarify the potentially inverse relationship, and any influential mediating factors. This information could then be used to shape the evolution of volunteer tourism, simultaneously addressing the key criticism that it functions as a temporally limited activity without positive longer term community benefits.

## **Discussion**

As an intended driver of development and peace, the UNWTO Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Tourism (UNWTO, 2016) called upon governments to ‘accelerate the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production’ (p. 3). In the case of volunteer tourism, sustainability is not only about the continuation of host community programmes, but also the extension of such altruism into the home communities of volunteer tourists. Amidst criticism about the effectiveness of volunteer tourism programmes and their sustainability, the formation of citizens who have a global outlook has sometimes been taken for granted as a justification for volunteer tourism (Lyons, et al., 2012).

The present study examined amongst other variables, an expectation/disconfirmation variable for personal transformation, which is another frequently assumed outcome of volunteer tourism. The prior literature has highlighted personal transformation as a commonplace and consistent outcome of volunteer tourism programmes, particularly when sending organisations realise their proposed programme outcomes (McGehee & Norman, 2002). Transformative learning has also become an anticipated outcome, building on the active marketing of this dimension by its proponents as a benefit (Knollenberg, et al., 2014). Though returned volunteer tourists may acquire enhanced reflexivity and a capacity for deep thinking (Zahra, 2011), there is no empirical evidence that links personal transformation and global citizenship in the volunteer

tourism context. Conversely, the results of the present study reveal a tentative relationship between the positive fulfilment of expectations about personal transformation and a disinclination to volunteer in home communities. If personal transformation is not conducive to local volunteering, the argument that returning volunteer tourists contribute subsequently within their own communities is thereby undermined.

Though the concept of global citizenship is associated with an interest in social justice and an acceptance of diversity, it should not be confined to overseas communities and experiences; since all communities have inequalities, the 'other' also exists within one's 'backyard'. The capacity to accept and embrace diversity that is inferred from the global citizenship concept is a product of globalisation and of increased cross-border mobilities. In the absence of the wherewithal to negotiate such diversity in home communities, it is more difficult to exercise tolerance further in more distant settings. Despite claims about enhanced post-return civic participation in social movements (McGhee, 2002), this study has not supported the purported longer term benefits of volunteer tourism. The results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and observations from the computed data show only weak links between volunteer tourism and home community volunteering. Coupled with the various critiques of how volunteer tourism impacts on its alleged beneficiaries, this study indicates that volunteer tourism may fall short of its more far reaching claims about creating globally aware citizens.

Within the literature, the claim that volunteer tourism builds global citizens is undermined by criticism that positive host community impacts are lacking (Guttentag, 2009). This critique is compounded by the present findings that its contributions to volunteer tourist home communities are marginal. Despite the contributions that internet-based connectivities have made to enhancing global understanding through better informed travellers, there is a

continuing danger of positioning those in need as being the 'other'. Such detachment may serve to widen the gulf of inter-cultural understanding, perpetuating the notion that the only worthwhile help emanates from overseas. The exclusion of home-grown altruism as a dimension of the global citizen is paradoxical when one considers the tendency to 'turn a blind eye' to the needs of home communities, while acknowledging the need to help overseas.

If the phenomenon is to make continuing contributions, the impacts of volunteer tourism should extend beyond the confines of individual volunteer tourism trips. A wider impact on the home communities of volunteer tourists through greater incidence of volunteering might strengthen home community understandings and interactions. It may also be that some of the money that is used to fund expensive volunteer tourism trips should be channelled to organisations that are better placed to assist disadvantaged communities overseas.

## **Limitations**

This study has two main limitations which are noted in turn. Two recommendations are also proposed.

One limitation is the small sample size. Through the two phases of the research, the investigators ultimately gathered a total of 40 completed responses. The reduced sample size relative to original intentions necessitated a change in the analysis from MLR to Mann-Whitney U-tests, and impeded the capacity to answer the research questions in the depth that was originally anticipated. Despite the demanding nature of longitudinal studies, and the validity of the ultimate statistical analyses, the researchers acknowledge that a larger sample size and additional analyses could have enriched the findings. In retrospect it is acknowledged that the development of a close, partnership style working relationship with one or two sending organisations might have overcome the challenge of non-participation due to unfamiliarity, and

may have enabled the distribution of questionnaires to multiple tourists undertaking trips over an extended period.

The second limitation is associated with the measurement of variables. While behavioural intentions are worthy of examination, the importance of acting on these intentions should not be overlooked. Therefore, aside from the two-round survey that was used in this study, a third data point measuring actual behaviour post-return could provide a clearer picture of the effects of volunteer tourism on actual volunteering rates amongst returned volunteer tourists. This aspect has not been explored in previous longitudinal studies of volunteer tourism (Lee & Yen, 2015; McGehee, 2002).

### **Conclusions and opportunities for further research**

From its original niche origins, the volunteer tourism phenomenon has entered the mainstream as a movement that benefits from scale and offers authentic cross-cultural interactions and transformational experiences (Wearing, Grabowski & Small, 2015). Given its recent emergence, the part that it plays in the future of tourism will be influenced by whether the volunteer experience remains both relevant and appealing to travellers. Though volunteer tourism currently enjoys wide popularity, the longer term sustainability of the model will depend on its capacity to show evidence that it is helping to produce the global citizens that it claims. To date, proponents have tended to assume that such benefits flow naturally. However, critics have challenged the purported longer-term impacts on host communities, even though participants do experience a variety of world cultures. The claim that volunteer tourism supports the formation of global citizens and produces longer lasting impacts on the post-trip traveller assumes that the traveller is empowered and poised to contribute to communities wherever they are found. However, the present study has turned this notion on its head by suggesting that returnees are equally likely to

turn away from contributing to their home communities. This challenges prevailing assumptions about the transformation of returned volunteer tourists into global citizens by virtue of their volunteer tourism experiences. Through the medium of EDP, the study has explored the concept of the global citizen in the volunteer tourism context and has challenged previously assumed notions.

Given the still-growing popularity of the volunteer tourism phenomenon and its embrace of the global citizenship philosophy as a justification, it is timely to explore its impact on traveller behaviours. Whilst the present study has only measured volunteer tourist behavioural intentions, there is a prospect of extending such inquiry into the realm of behavioural realisation. While other studies have found evidence of modest increases in civic participation following volunteer tourism trips (McGehee, 2002), the contradiction that has been presented in this study indicates a need for further study to confirm or refute the claimed link between volunteer tourism and global citizenship.

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