

Abstract

The purpose of this exploratory study has been to explore the various situations that make a past volunteer tourist not want to use the same sending organization again for future volunteer trips. And, if efforts made by the organization may reverse their negative attitude towards the organization. This study makes use of Projects Abroad as its case.

The literature review covers concepts such as volunteer tourism, satisfaction, and loyalty. They help frame the context of why satisfied volunteer tourists may choose not to remain loyal to an organization.

A sequential mixed methods approach has been chosen in order to answer the research questions best. An initial survey has been used to gather data, which will form the base of the findings. A total of 96 respondents have answered the survey. The analysis of the initial data has also identified respondents for the second data collecting phase. The second phase consists of eight semi-structured interviews. All the interviews are recorded and transcribed.

Findings show that the various aspects of volunteering with Projects Abroad have received more satisfying ranks than dissatisfying. That especially two aspects regarding gained travel experience and gained personal insight do not receive any dissatisfying ranks. On the contrary, three aspects relating to information at various stages of volunteering have received the lowest ranks of satisfaction. Chi-square tests have proved that there are not associations between the various variables, indicating that the results may have been reached by chance. The findings also show that the majority of the respondents are willing to recommend Projects Abroad to family, friends and others, and at the same time they are willing to promote and repurchase an experience with Projects Abroad. There is an interest in a loyalty program, which will offer discounts and other benefits to loyal volunteer tourists.

Findings regarding what situations may make the volunteer tourist disloyal derived from the quantitative findings suggest that cost, seeking other experiences, and other reasons are the biggest barriers to choosing Projects Abroad again. The qualitative findings also suggest cost being a major barrier, however, also point to lack of transparency and own contacts as being barriers. Especially the establishment of own contacts may be a key finding that sets volunteer tourism apart from similar studies conducted within tourism.

The discussion makes suggestions how to minimize the various barriers' effect on further intentions as well as address issues such as lack of information. Projects Abroad should focus on improving their image, and market special discounts such as the repeat discount of 10% to generate more interest in repurchase. However, most important for Projects Abroad is to monitor and evaluate their communication flow between offices and between organization and customer in order to improve their services.

As little is written on this topic, future research and studies should be conducted to fill in various gaps there exists.