

A COMPARATIVE STUDY CONCERNING THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS VOLUNTOURISM

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Abstract: *Known as a combination of volunteering and tourism, voluntourism is a new concept, a great opportunity to visit a foreign country, use time efficiently and play an important role in local communities. This concept is very suitable to young people, but they are not the only ones interested in it. Even if it is not known by all young people this concept is emerging as a form of volunteering.*

In the present study, based on the information obtained through a survey, using as research instrument a questionnaire, authors want to emphasize how known is the concept of voluntourism by young people and what is their perception toward volunteering, in general, and voluntourism, in particular. The questionnaire contains 27 questions and was applied among young people aged between 18 and 30 years from Poland and Romania.

Key words: *volunteering, voluntourism, young people, attitude*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays when most of young people want to see the whole world, to experience, to develop personally and professionally, society makes available a number of opportunities through which they can achieve their goals, and in this context voluntourism is one of those opportunities. Voluntourism it is about volunteering and tourism and it means to dedicate time for the benefit of a noble cause without being paid and visit a new place in the same time [2]. The concept of voluntourism began to take more and more shape in the whole world and can be defined as how a person, usually a young man, spends his vacation in a place other than his residence, as a volunteer, so he has the occasion to view new places and try new experiences. Actually, voluntourism can be described as a win-win process, which can benefit both to one who helps and to is helped.

The term voluntourism can be apply to all those people/tourists who are volunteers in an organized way to undertake vacations 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. So, any tourist who is implied in volunteer work while travelling can be considered a 'volunteer tourist', regard-less of whether the volunteer work is the only purpose of vacation [1].

Concerning to voluntourism trend, according to different sources, we can mention that in 2004, there were more than 800 organisations offering volunteering in 200 countries, in 2006, voluntourism was estimated to be worth US\$150 million, in 2008, a Tourism and Research Marketing survey of 300 organisations estimated the market size to be 1.6 million volunteer tourists per year worth £1.3 billion, in 2008, the market was estimated to have grown 5-10% in Western Europe over the course of five years, in 2009, GeckoGo's survey of more than two thousand voluntourists worldwide found the UK to be the third largest originating market, in 2012, 35% of adults declared that they would like to try a vacation involving a voluntourism component, in addition to the 6% who had already do this. [3,4,5]

About voluntourists' preferences the researches made reveal that: 44% prefer trips longer than one month, 42% between two weeks and a month, the most important "destination" are Peru (23%) and Brazil (14%). Related to types of projects in which voluntourists want to be involved 62% would like to undertake humanitarian voluntourism, 56% conservation, 56% teaching, 53% community development and 28% construction. [4,5]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Studying different publications from the specialized literature and using the survey as research method and questionnaire as research instrument, followed by data processing and analysis, the authors of the article, first, want to emphasize how known is voluntourism by young people, what is their perception about it and, second, to compare the attitude towards voluntourism of young people from Poland and Romania.

The survey realized using the application provided by Google Docs and in order to complete it the young people had to access the following link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScGwi9SogOzD3gKj2F2nXc1wL8_JxrGubhk nIAd0EwPfmZHSg/viewform. The survey was realized using the internet.

The survey has 27 questions divided in three sections (general information, volunteering and voluntourism). The first section, the general information, has 5 questions about the participants (age, gender, last educational level graduated, occupation, country).

The second section tries to obtain information about the young people attitude, implication and disponibility related to volunteering. The 16 questions from this section are closed questions with a single correct answer (4, 8, 13, 14), closed questions with multiple answers (2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16) and evaluation scales (1, 3). So, young people answered to the following questions:

1. What is your opinion about volunteering?
2. With what you associate volunteering?
3. How important is volunteering for you?
4. Are you or have you been volunteer?
5. Which were your main sources of information regarding volunteer activities you have been involved?
6. Who do you think benefits from volunteering?
7. What are the benefits of volunteering?
8. Are you interested to be involved in volunteering activities?
9. What are the reasons that determines your to get involved in volunteering activities?
10. In what field you want to run volunteer activities in which you participate?
11. What are the activities you want to get involved as a volunteer?
12. What kind of activities you want to run as a volunteer?
13. How many hours you are willing to spend per week as a volunteer?
14. How long would you like to be a volunteer?
15. Which skills you want to develop by volunteering?
16. What are the reasons that can lead to not get involved in volunteering?

The third section tries to obtain information about how known is the concept of voluntourism by young people from Poland and Romania and how is their attitude toward voluntourism. The 6 questions from this section are closed questions with a single correct answer (1, 4, 5) and open questions (2, 3, 6). So, young people answered to the following questions:

1. Do you know the concept of voluntourism?

2. If the answer is yes. With what you associate voluntourism?
3. What are the benefits of voluntourism in your opinion?
4. Do you / did you practice voluntourism?
5. Are you interested to be involved in voluntourism?
6. What are the reasons that can lead to get involved or not in voluntourism?

The survey was realized in the period 13st October 2016 – 5th November 2016 in Bydgoszcz (Poland) and Timisoara (Romania). The sample consisted in 200 subjects aged between 18 and 30 years, 48% are male and 52% female. Concerning the educational level 60.3% of the participants graduated university courses, 22% post-university courses, 16.2% high school and 1.5% vocational school.

RESEARCH RESULTS

According to the answers provided by the 200 subjects concerning the attitude towards volunteering, many of Romanian young people have a good and very good opinion about volunteering (80%) and 65% consider that volunteering is important and very important for them, compared to 43% of Polish young people who appreciate as good and very good volunteering and 33% who think that volunteering is important and very important for them. (figure 1, figure 2)

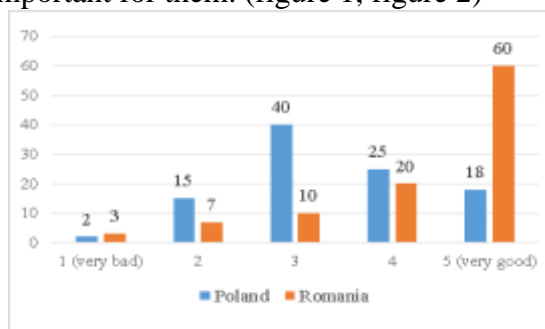


Figure 1 What is your opinion about volunteering?

Source: own researches

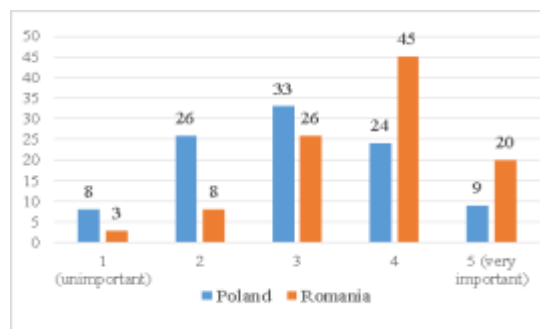


Figure 2 How important is volunteering for you?

Usually, volunteering is associated with unpaid work, experience, help, personal satisfaction and even enriched CV, capitalized time or necessity. (figure 3)

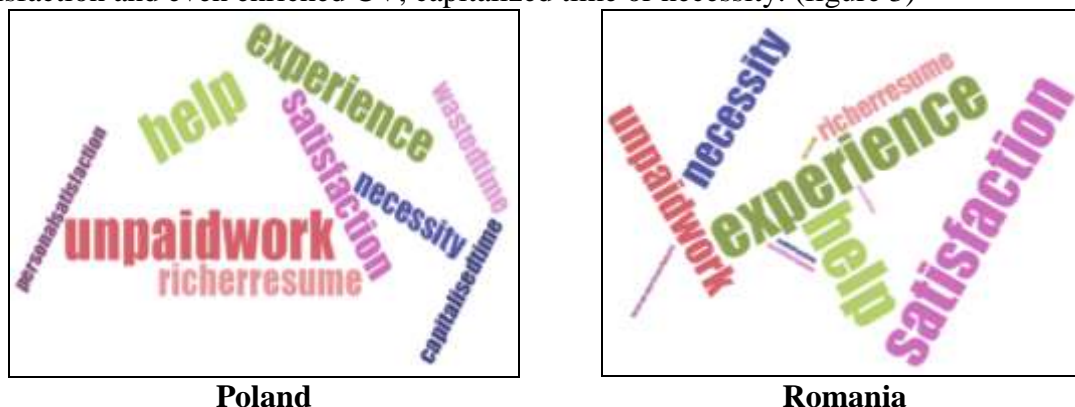


Figure 3 With what you associate volunteering?

Source: own researches, responses were processed on www.jasondavies.com/wordcloud/

Concerning the involvement degree of young people in volunteering, 53% of Polish young people and 62% of Romanian young people were volunteers. (figure 4)

As we can notice from figure 5 the main sources of information concerning volunteering for both groups were friends/acquaintances network, the internet and even posters for Polish young people. Friends/acquaintance network is the main source of information because is the closest and trustworthy source of information and regarding the Internet, it is also the most used source of information for young people.

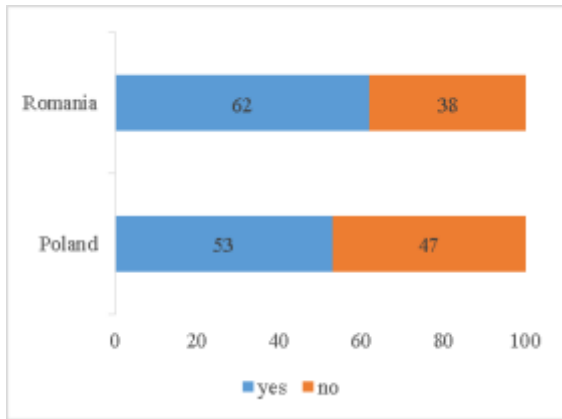


Figure 4 Are you or have you been volunteer?

Source: own researches

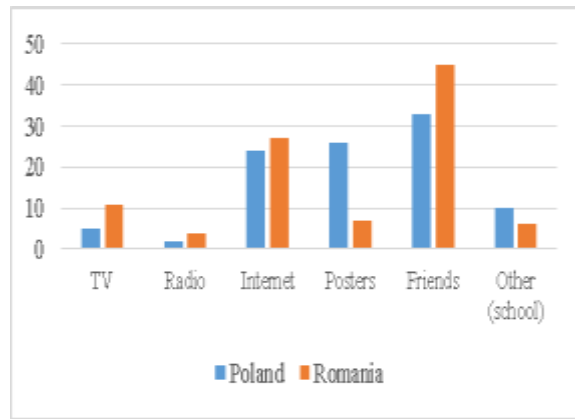


Figure 5 Which were your main sources of information regarding volunteer activities you have been involved?

Related to the benefits of volunteering, most of young people consider that all variants (community, society, initiator organization, volunteer, people with problems) had to gain from volunteering, also, community for Romanian young people and people with problems for Polish young people are considered beneficiaries of volunteering. (figure 6)

The main benefits of were the experience, personal development, satisfaction and acquaintances. (figure 7)

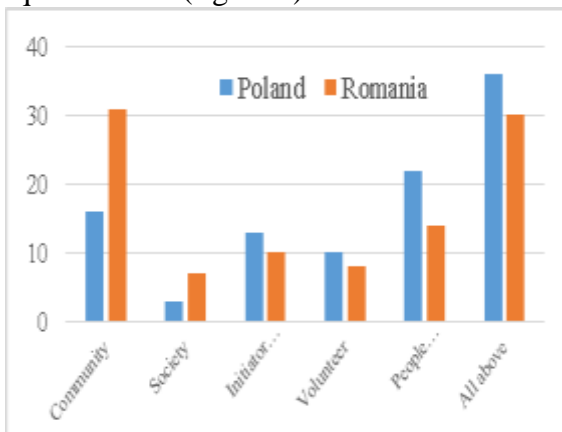


Figure 6 Who do you think benefits from volunteering?

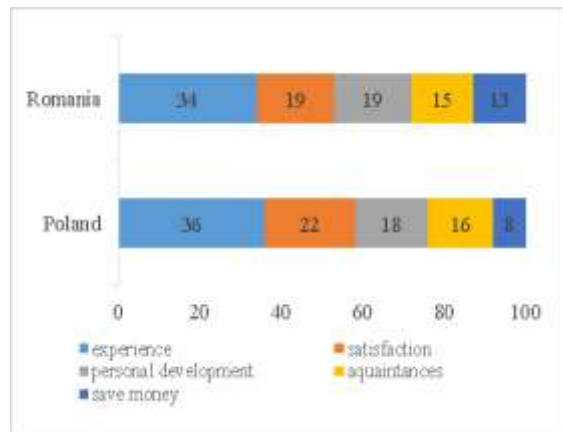


Figure 7 What are the benefits of volunteering?

Source: own researches

The interest of the young people toward volunteering is different, it is low among Polish young people and it is high among Romanian young people. (figure 8) Those young people who want to be involved in volunteering prefer education, social, art/culture or health field and as activity they preferred group activities, with children and young people or with poor families.

The main reasons which determined young people to be involved in volunteering are the desire to help people, to gain experience and knowledge. Also, the main reasons which lead young people from Poland and Romania to not get involved in volunteering are lack of time and fear of failure.

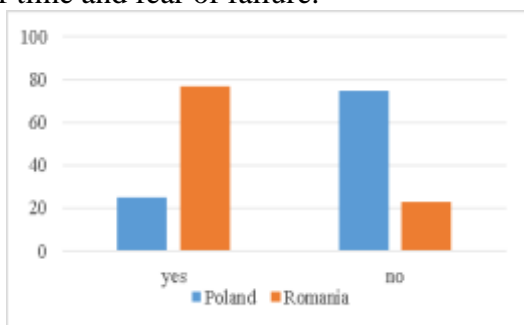


Figure 8 Are you interested to be involved in volunteering activities?

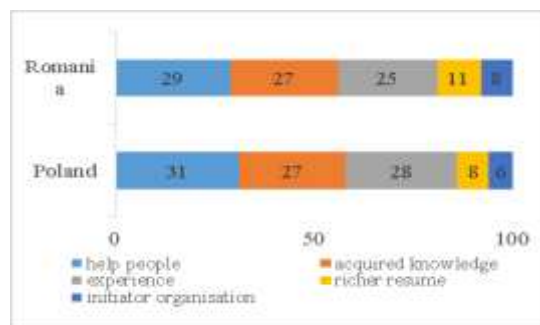


Figure 9 What are the reasons that determines your to get involved in volunteering activities?

Source: own researches

About the availability of the volunteers concerning the time spent in volunteering activities, we can mention that most of them are willing to spend 2-4 hours/week and are willing to be volunteers for as long as it is needed. (figure 10, 11)

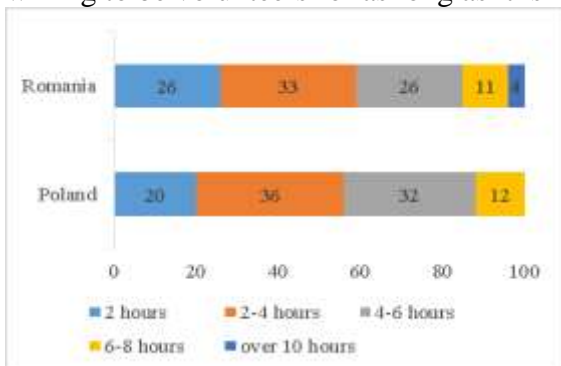


Figure 10 How many hours you are willing to spend per week as a volunteer?

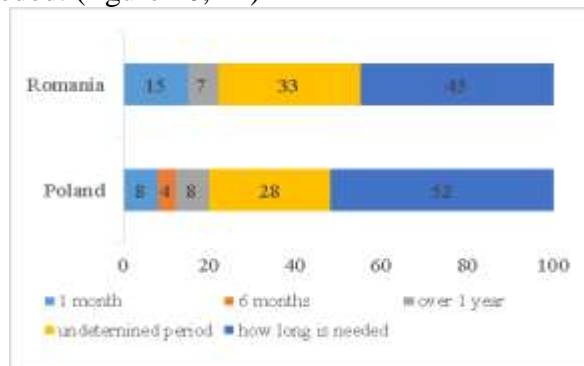


Figure 11 How long would you like to be a volunteer

Source: own researches

Also, the skills the young people from Poland and Romania want to develop by involving in volunteering are mainly the responsibility, social and professional skills and development of work ethic.

According to the answers provided by respondents, most of them do not know the concept of voluntourism (figure 12).

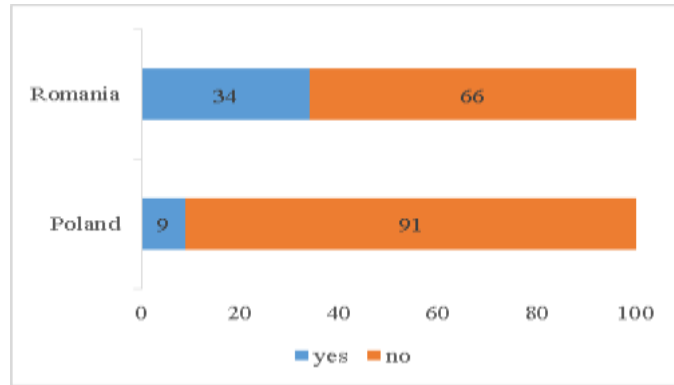


Figure 12 Do you know the concept of voluntourism?

Source: own researches

Those respondents who know the concept of voluntourism associate this concept mostly with help, volunteering, travel, personal development and even experience, development of community or new people. (figure 13)



Poland



Romania

Figure 13 With what you associate voluntourism?

Source: own researches, responses were processed on www.jasondavies.com/wordcloud/

Referring to the benefits of voluntourism most of respondents believe that experience, personal satisfaction, new people, make good or personal development are the main benefits. (figure 14)



Poland



Romania

Figure 14 What are the benefits of voluntourism in your opinion?

Source: own researches, responses were processed on www.jasondavies.com/wordcloud/

Concerning the involvement of young people on voluntourism activities most of them did not practice voluntourism (75% of Polish young people, 64% of Romanian young people) and are not interested to be involved in those type of activities (75% of Polish young people, 64% of Romanian young people). (figure 15, figure 16)

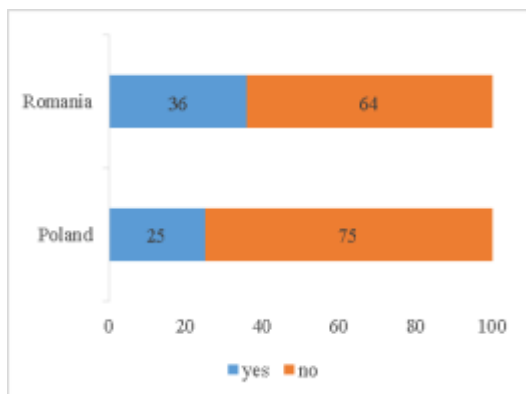


Figure 15 Do/did you practice voluntourism?

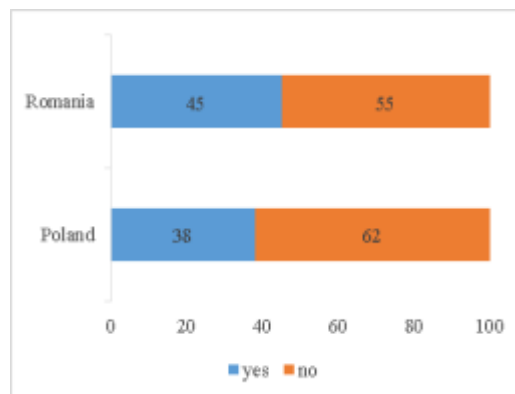


Figure 16 Are you interested to be involved in voluntourism?

Source: own researches

Related to the reasons that can lead young people to get involved in voluntourism, research shows that experience, help, curiosity, leisure, development, abilities are the most common reasons. On the other side, the most common reasons that can lead young people not to get involved in voluntourism are fear of failure, lack of time or personal problems.

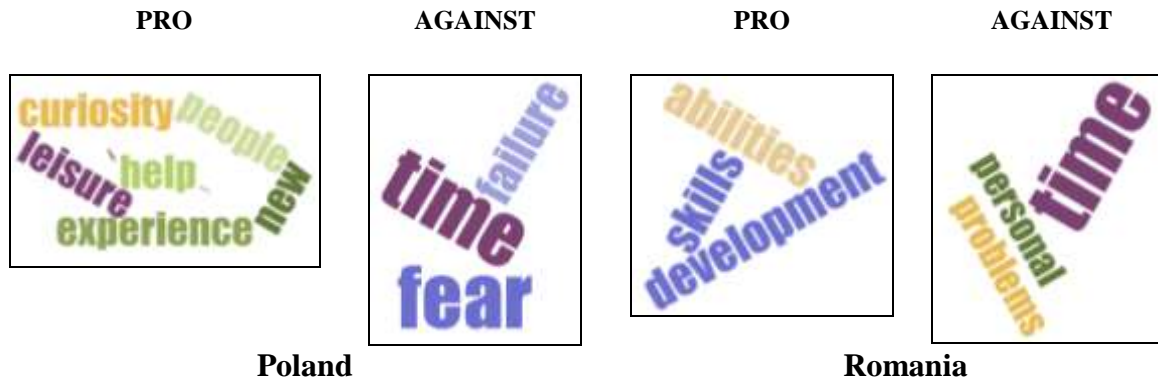


Figure 17 What are the reasons that can lead to get involved or not in voluntourism?

Source: own researches, responses were processed on www.jasondavies.com/wordcloud/

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the answers provided by the young people from Poland and Romania to the 27 questions we noticed the following:

- The concept of voluntourism is not very known by young people from Poland and Romania who participated at the research. the reason is, on the one hand, the lack of culture regarding the practice of this kind of volunteering and on the other hand the lack of projects aimed at printing this culture among youth;
- Voluntourism is associated with help, volunteering, travel, personal development and experience;
- The benefits of voluntourism are experience, personal satisfaction, meet new people, personal development;

- Most of young people were not involved in voluntourism activities and are not interested to be involved, the main reasons are: lack of time, fear of failure or personal problems.

As a final conclusion, we can say that voluntourism is an opportunity for personal development of young people, knowledge or discovery of new places and a way of developing and promoting volunteering in various forms through the journey.

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