

# A Student's Attitude towards Sports and Recreational Tourism at the School

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper, we dealt with the examination of the statistical differences between athletes and non-athletes of school age in their attitude towards sport and sports- recreational tourism and whether there is a difference between older and younger children in these two dependent variables. Participants in the study were children athletes (those who are actively engaged in a sport that is, have regular training and participated in a club) and those children who are engaged in recreational sports or are not involved in sports at all. The sample was N = 357, of which 182 (51.0%) are athletes (51.0%) and 175 (49.0%) are non-athletes. To investigate the influence of their age, subjects were divided into younger (10 to 12 years) and older children (13 to 15 years). In total, there were 168 boys (47.1%) and 189 (52.9%) girls. Approximately the same percentage of respondents came from town (48%) and country (52%) area. Although the most of respondents reported they like traveling in their spare time, they stated that their traveling depends on parents' income. Boys are more active than girls, are more involved in organized sport and prefer more intense and more frequent sport traveling. Respondents who do not do sports mostly preferred activities related to fun and relaxation, as well as socializing with peers.

**Key words:** Children, Sport, Gender Differences, Attitude and Sport-Recreational Tourism.

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## INTRODUCTION

Any serious sporting activity in early childhood requires sacrifice and a complete change of life style in relation to their peers. Training and preparation become important part of everyday life if young athletes achieve their goals and begin to be actively and seriously devoted to sports. The largest percentage of our children stated that they decided which sport they should practise independently or directly on the insistence of their parents. However, it means that there were made under the general influence of the family and parents who have a positive attitude towards sports (Bačanac et al., 2009; Bajraktarević, 2012). The impact of adequate physical activity on a child's development is simply beneficial. The direct effects of physical exercises are: improved circulation, better metabolism in the body and effective elimination of unnecessary substances from the body, all of which lead

to a significant improvement in the functioning of the organism as a whole (Tubić et al. 2012). However, more significant are long-term positive effects of activities and actions which are primarily reflected in a more regular development of bones and muscles, strengthening the defence capabilities of the child, and also the formation and development of the his personality (Ostojic et al., 2014).

In addition to many benefits that sport has for development of the child, it has a significant impact on the socialization of the child and his normal mental development. Most sports, especially team sports, require sport intelligence that positively influences the development of general creativity of the child (Smoll, 1988). The exercises are performed according to certain rules, so children can develop a sense of discipline and

responsibility.

The results of surveys show that active athletes differ from non-athletes in many ways such as emotional stability, self-confidence, perseverance, responsibility, the need for domination; they also show that any kind of physical activity improves emotional functioning, improves self-esteem and physical self - concept and self-satisfaction increases (Biddle, 2000; Fox, 2000, Tubic, et al., 2012; McClenahan, et al., 2003). Doing sports gives women many advantages. It is confirmed that girls who are active in sports have better success in school, are less likely to be faced with an unwanted pregnancy in their teenage years. They also have higher self-esteem self-confidence (Roberts and Treasure, 1992) and more often enrol in colleges and very rarely have problems with abuse of narcotic drugs and addiction (Ponorac et al., 2013). Participation of children in sport reaches its peak between 10 and 13 years of age; then, it steadily declines so that a relatively small percentage of young people stay in sport until the age of eighteen (Bajraktarević, 2012; Nader et al., 2008). In adolescence, (Rowland,1999) their parents, and their peers less influence young people, so the motivation for physical activity depends more on social factors than on biological or family factors. It is true that a child who is actively involved in sports has less free time, but will also have less time for many social vices which are today present in almost every environment. Sport means a healthy diet, regular rest and healthy sleep, which is beneficial for mental abilities of a child. Sport is an opportunity for the child to release the excess negative energy (Pate, et al., 1996; Grund, et al., 2001).

Sport also includes sport travelling. Sports tourism is a temporary travel and stay of individuals outside their usual place of residence due to: participation in physical activity, watching physical activity or visit the attractions that are related to sport (Kesar, 2011). Some authors (Robinson and Gammon, 2004) classify sports tourists into hard and soft sports tourists. *Hard* sport tourists individuals who actively or passively participate in sports competitions and who, therefore undertake a journey; *Soft* sport tourists are tourists who travel in order to have active recreation in a particular type of sport (skiing, cycling, swimming, etc). Basically, motivations of sports tourists are leisure, relaxation, health, and stress reduction, etc. Seasonal travelling (winter and summer trips), with respect to the frequency and length, are mixed recreational tourism. Nowadays, children seldom play in the natural environment, and unfortunately this leads to physical and social neglect. The main indicator of physical neglect or poor health is the increasing number of obese children (Benson et al., 2008; Magnusson et al., 2008). Economic factors are very often crucial in the selection of activities; many interesting contents are unaffordable for large part of the youth population. Many researchers (Mehlbye and Jensen, 2003) point out that certain activities and interests are for many children

unaffordable and limited due to their price. Similarly, one study has shown that young people from higher social classes spend their free time in organized activities of their interest, which requires considerable financial resources (Petrović and Zotović, 2007). Research has shown that high fees and funding for travel is a significant barrier to greater involvement of young people in sports clubs and recreational trips. The aim of the research was to determine whether playing sports at younger school age contributes to more positive feelings towards sports and sports recreational activities.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey was conducted in Serbia, exactly, on the territory of Vojvodina. Teachers and students in primary schools were tested with the permission of competent person. The survey was done in groups and participants were not obligated to write their names in the questionnaire. After the questionnaires were distributed, the instructions for answering the questions in the questionnaire were given to the students with a note that all the results will be used only in scientific purposes. Instructions were the same for all the respondents. During statistical analysis we used parametric statistical methods. The verification of all applied tests was carried out by checking normality of distribution. SPSS 23.0 was done by data analysis. To calculate the frequency of dependent variables the following parameters were taken: the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, asymmetry, coefficient of curvatures and elongation. Participants in the study were children athletes (those who are actively engaged in a sport (regular training and participate in a club) and those children who were engaged in recreational sports or are not involved in sports at all. The sample was N = 357, of which 182 (51.0%) are athletes and 175 (49.0%) non-athletes. To investigate the influence of age, the subjects were divided into younger (10 to 12 years) and older children (13 to 15 years). A total of 168 respondents (47.1%) boys and 189 (52.9%) girls participated in the survey. Respondents who were occasionally engaged in sports did not train with a coach or they participate at competitions; they were categorized as recreational athletes, and they make up a group that is not actively engaged in sports. Participants were divided into four sub-samples according to gender and participation in a sport.

In accordance with the basic research, we set out the following tasks: (a) to examine possible differences in athletes and non-athletes's attitude towards sport and recreational journey (b) to examine whether being a male of female influences the attitude towards sport and sports recreational tourism. The study used following instruments for data collection: (a) Socio demographic questionnaire (USDP), (b) Questionnaire for attitudes towards sport and (c) Questionnaire for attitudes towards

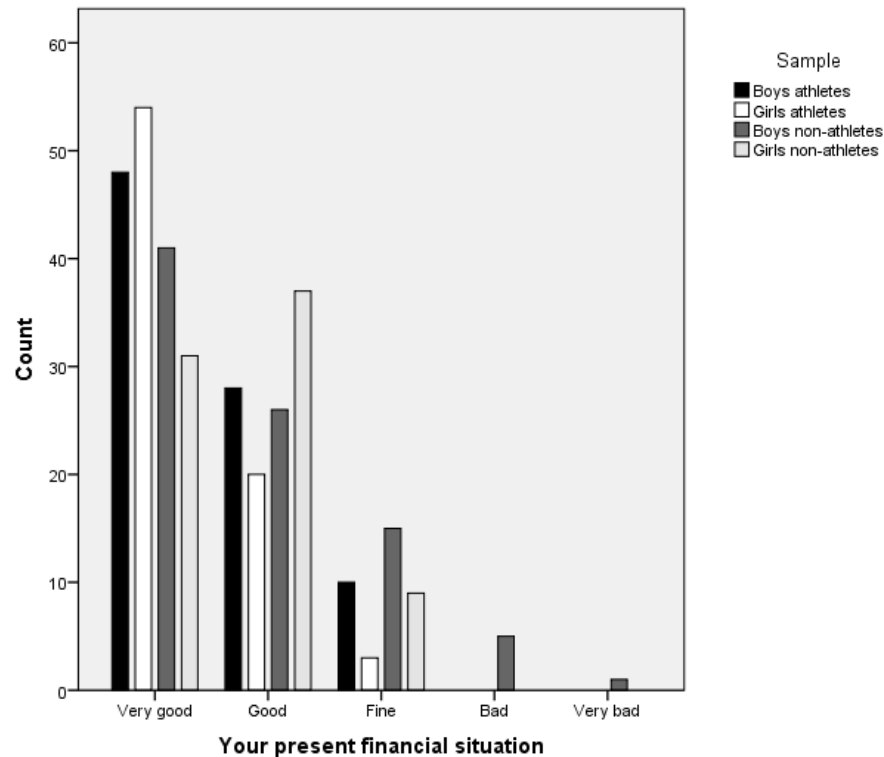


Figure 1. Relation between financial situation and doing sports.

sports - recreational tourism.

The attitude of children towards sport and tourism was determined by means of questions to which the respondents chose answers to the evaluation scale of 1 to 5, ranging from strongly disagree, to strongly agree. The research was conducted in several Vojvodina's elementary schools. Testing lasted up to 45 min. The rules were the same for all respondents. Testing subsamples of athletes was done only once, during their free time, between matches at tournaments, while students from the sub-group of non-athletes tested during school hours, in agreement with the teacher of physical education at their school. Professionals, under the supervision of a psychologist, conducted testing.

### Data Analysis

To determine the interactive influence of gender and sports to self-assessment of the respondents we used the basic methods of descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and multivariate analysis of variance. Regression analysis was applied to obtain information about which specific domains of self-assessment contribute most to the overall self-evaluation of girls and boys who are engaged or not engaged in active sports.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of our research have included the following:

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

First of all, according to the respondents, it can be said that standard of pupils is a crucial variable that affects the level of their satisfaction in sports and the use of free time. Low socioeconomic status and poor material resources cause less interest and fewer opportunities for cultural, creative and physical needs of young people. Poor resources influence the extent of cultural needs (visiting theatre, cinema, travel, etc.) and the interests you can have in your free time. According to respondents, material status is becoming increasingly important nowadays. These differences can be seen in the selection of subculture, the choice of places where they go, what music you listen to, with which people they meet, with whom they associate, how they dress, where they travel, where they spend their summer and winter holidays, who are their role models, etc (Tomic, 2008; Ostojić et al., 2014). The largest number of respondents reported that the financial situation of their families was very good 53.2% (Figure 1). Some 34% of respondents stated that their financial status was good while 11, 3% of them claimed that their situation was not so good.

It is noteworthy to know that students who declared they have very bad financial situation at home came from rural areas, and that the majority of respondents who claimed that their financial situation was very good, came from urban areas. The fact is that the city has a greater range of facilities for children, which can have negative

consequences for children's development. The city offers more opportunities for children, but there are also some drawbacks, such as various kinds of bad behaviour. Children who live only with one parent have fewer opportunities for sport activities and travel. On the other side, children who live with both parents can afford many activities and even have time and money to be professional sportsmen. Professional sport requires a lot of devotion and self-control. A number of students (athletes and non-athletes) are supported by their families for sports, sports recreational trips and creative activities outside the school 76%. Among them there are students who are actively involved in sports and sports recreational activities (three times a week (27.5%), although there are some respondents who said that they spend more than seven hours a week for various types of sports and recreational activities.

### **Respondents Attitude towards Sports**

The analysis of variance showed that athletes and non-athletes are significantly different in attitude towards sport and sports recreational tourism ( $p < 0.05$ ). Variable of doing sports proved to be statistically significant in the analysis of interactions with gender and age related to their attitude towards sport. It can be said that involvement in sports significantly change attitude towards sport, which will be demonstrated with further analysis. Age, as an independent variable, has not proven to be relevant, that is, both older and younger students do not differ significantly in any of the dependent variables. So we can say that the period of childhood is not a period of change when we discuss about attitude towards sport and sports recreational tourism, and the differences between younger and older students were not statistically significant. The gender affects the collation with parents during planning of sport recreational activities. Males were prone to cooperate with adults, while females have more personal attitude. Studies suggest that positive parental influence can be achieved in two ways; parents can make a positive impact as "managers" of free time, controlling and planning, to a certain extent, family and children's activities, as well as models that shape the interests and habits of children (Larson et al., 2001).

The study also showed that males are more active than females and are more involved in organized sport, and prefer more intense and more frequent sports travel, while girls prefer formal or recreational aspects of the activity. Respondents who do not do sport mostly prefer activities related to fun and relaxation, as well as socializing with peers.

The most common sport with students is football, followed by basketball, handball, karate, athletics, swimming, water polo, and baseball, while the most common sports with girls are volleyball, dance, and karate. 60.1% of athletes and 49.6% of non-athletes

consider that the professional sport is extremely difficult. This research has shown that athletes usually have a positive attitude towards sport. Significant differences can be noticed, however, between males and females non-athletes. Of the total of number of athletes in this survey, 66% of them fully agree that sport is necessary for success in life. About 87% of male's athletes followed by 76% of females athletes would prefer to have more hours of physical education per week, exactly they would like to have it five times a week (every day). The results of our study confirm the positive correlation between successful sports and positive aspects of self-image and significantly smaller number of underrepresented behavioural problems. The successful practice of sport is a powerful incentive for the development of self-esteem and perceived competence. The intensity of the educational interests is positively associated with students' tourism and the average academic achievement, students who prefer sports and sports activities with broader interests and intensive educational and artistic interests have greater interests in school travelling and achieve better academic success (Ostojic et al., 2014). There was a statistically significant difference in spending free time with their peers ( $\chi^2 = 12.3$  sig  $< 0.015$ ), largest number of students spends their free time with their peers, as well as doing sports and recreational activities in nature. There was a significant difference in the impact of the choice of available activities ( $\chi^2 = 75.8$  sig  $< 0.00$ ). The statement Sport is crucial for developing important values in life is fully agreed with 76% of girl's athletes, 75% of boys athletes, 59% of boys non-athletes and 49% of girls non-athletes (Figure 3). It is true that success in sport comes from perseverance and responsibility. Sport makes it possible to develop moral virtues such as integrity, honesty, fairness, empathy, generosity, and respect for others and develops the ability to cope with the pressures and stress (Bačanac et al., 2009). The statement Sport is of great importance in our society is fully agreed with 49% of boy's athletes, 37% of girl's non-athletes, 36% of girls athletes and 30% of boys non-athletes.

### **Respondents' Attitude towards Sports-Recreation**

Besides sports and attitude toward it, we have been interviewing students about their leisure time and the way they spend it. According to the frequency of guidance, leisure activities include sports, reading, recreation, fun with peers, listening to music, watching videos and TV, hobbies, art (playing, painting, and writing), additional learning and self-education, household chores and other activities. Approximately 50% of the interviewed students spend their spare time at home and the other 50% outside it. Most pupils are influenced by their peers in the choice of leisure activities, thus achieving a high degree of freedom in choosing activities that will be suitable for them, which is very important for socialization and

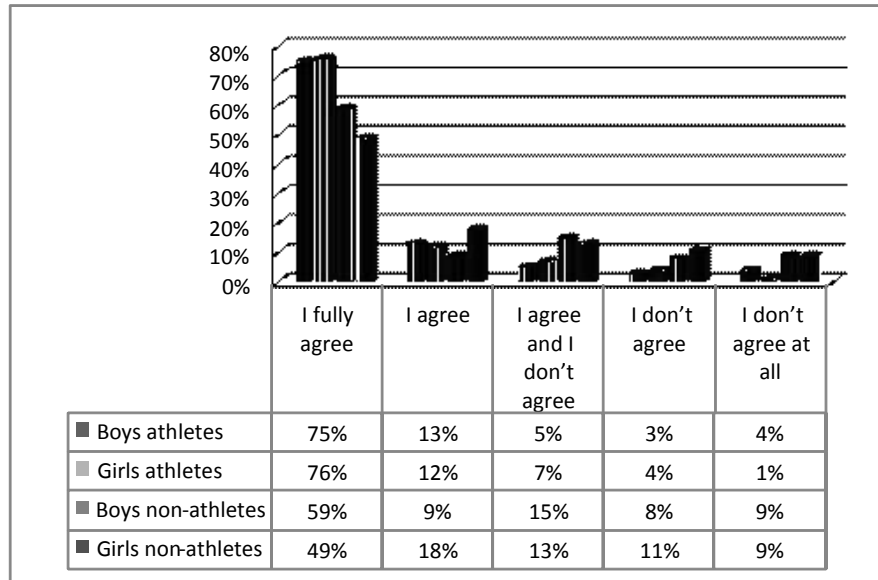


Figure 2. Socializing; travelling and making new friends are most important things in sport.

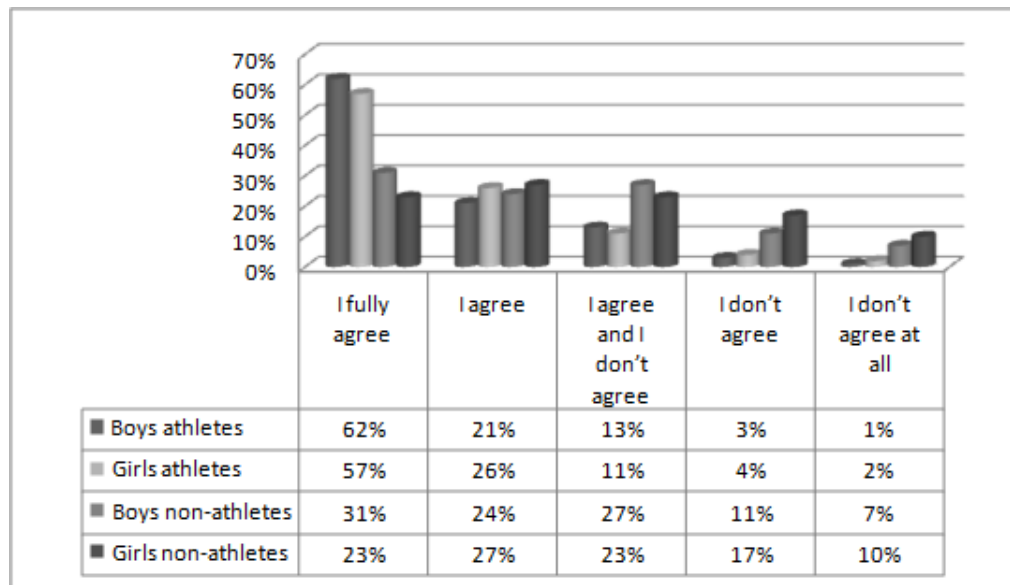
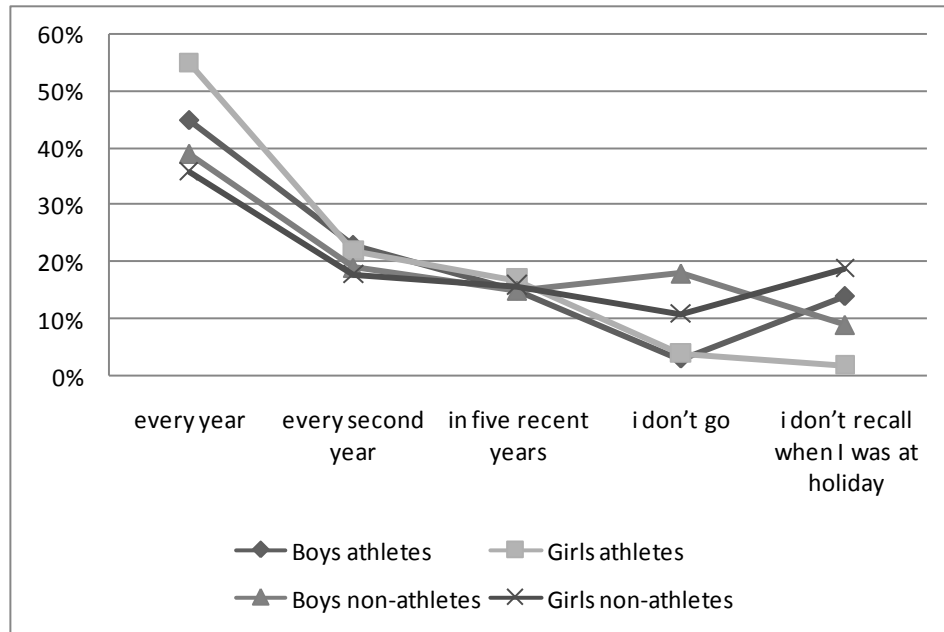


Figure 3. Sport is crucial for developing important values in life.

independence of students. When they go out, young people usually go to sports fields, parks, on streets and squares (Maksić and Tenjović, 2008). The result is low but significant correlation between sports and recreational activities and school achievement ( $r = 0.18, p = .009$ ;  $r = 0.19, p = .006$ ), which would mean that pupils who achieve better results at school prefer sports-recreational activities too. The statement socializing; travelling and making new friends are most important things in sport is fully agreed with 62% of boy athletes, 57% of girl athletes, 31% of boys non-athletes and 23%

of girls non-athletes (Figure 4). The main characteristic of sport is competition and there is no sport without competition and travel. Sport for Children presents an educational social activity through which they gain many friends, learn the discipline and teamwork.

This study also includes a research about sports-recreational tourism. Sports recreational tourism presents an area which is developing really fast and has a unique ability to attract large number of visitors giving the participants a chance to experience sport and to satisfy their needs for activities according to their own choice in



**Figure 4.** Going to sports-recreational trips (summer and winter holidays).

order to rest and have fun. Sport recreation as a special area is focused on satisfying basic human needs and interests through range of different sport-recreational activities that are available to everyone and coordinated with the level of ability, health condition and age characteristics of each individual. Sports-recreational journeys can increase physical and social well-being of children and create a complete personality. During the journeys, students are getting used to living together and helping each other. They come in different situations when they have to react quickly and independently. Another positive thing about this kind of journey is that changing the environment breaks the everyday routine and it keeps the children away from the stress which brings the life in the urban area and it also has a positive effect on psychological development of the children. Traveling can provide convenient conditions for meeting new people, getting to know each other, bonding and tolerance of diversity. So, it can be said that not only that travelling makes a significant economic contribution to the all destinations that students visit, but through travel, students can also develop their personal skills and establish social and cultural connections and gain experience. So, considering all this, students have been asked do they travel and how often and the frequency of their travelling can be seen in Figure 4. Each year summer and winter holidays are attended by more than 55% of girl's athletes, 45% of boys athletes, 39% of boys and 36% of girls non-athletes (Figure 2). Every other year 23% of girl's athletes, 22% of boy's athletes, 19% of boy's non-athletes and 18% girls non-athletes. Approximately the same number of athletes and non-athletes have gone to holidays every five years. 18% of

boy's athletes said that they have never travelled to the sport - recreational activities. At the end, 53.7% of respondents reported that they had travelled abroad. Half of those who had travelled abroad declared that they travelled to Former Yugoslav Republic such as Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia and the other half stated that they travelled to European countries such as Hungary, Romania and Greece. The majority of respondents (88%) received pocket money from his parents. 33% of participants (athletes and non-athletes) receives pocket money on daily basis, 47% of respondents received pocket money monthly. Money is usually spent on snacks, sweets, a variety of hobbies (collecting pictures, toys) school supplies and so on. 10% of respondents said they only occasionally receive pocket money and 10% of respondents said that parents buy everything they need, so there is no need for pocket money.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the theoretical approach, the results and their interpretations, the following conclusions can be drawn: There is no difference in attitude toward sport between athletes and non-athletes. Gender does not influence significantly the formation of attitude towards sport. Those individuals who are actively involved in sports have an advantage in all aspects primarily because they feel better about their body, feel that they belong to a group (collective sports), know the meaning of victory and defeat and know how to deal with them. Studies have shown that well-organized free time leads to positive and

socially acceptable behaviours of young people contributing to the development of healthy, happy and self-conscious personality (Gilman, 2001; Larson and Verma, 1999). Sports activities will also have a significant impact on the health and on the quality of every individual, their family and society in general. Also, if a child is active now, it does not mean that this child will be healthy all his life. Parents, therefore, can provide the foundation for their children, and they will, when they grow up, take responsibility for their behaviour and way of life. It is much more likely that the child, who receives quality information very early and acquire healthy habits, will live much healthier. Tension of any kind can be prevented and healed with sport activities that is, to know how to select and control the expression of emotional reactions. Any preventive action for better psychological and physical health of young people is much cheaper and more effective than facing the consequences resulted from the loss of healthy environment. Especially nowadays when young people grow with computers and TV programmes. According to the results of this study, we can notice that sports and recreational tourism is not sufficiently present in student's free time. The results have also confirmed that diversity of content as a part of Vojvodina's touristic offer has a positive effect on the quality of tourist trips for students. Touristic destinations of Vojvodina have great potentials which are not exploited enough.

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