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## **TOURIST AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY OF YOUTHS ON THE BASE OF STUDENTS FROM SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OSTROWIEC ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKI**

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### **Key words:**

- tourism,
- recreation,
- tourist and recreational activity,
- physical activity

### **Abstract:**

Tourism and recreation are seen as dynamic and diverse phenomena concerning various aspects of our lives, therefore researchers are focused on them. Authors of the paper were inspired by tourism and recreation development, especially on the base of activities taken up by young people. Empirical analysis of youths' motives and attitudes towards tourist and recreational activity forms was done.

Circumstances mentioned above contributed to the aim of the paper which is to assess tourist and recreational activity of pupils from Ostrów Świętokrzyski secondary schools. The aim was achieved thanks to survey method and its analysis.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Contemporary civilization progress caused bigger interest in free time activities. Młynarski points out, amongst others, higher education of the society as a determinant of the progress [5]. Educational and pedagogical importance of tourism is appreciated more and more often nowadays. Tourism influences human development, physical development of the whole society; it has also preventive meaning and it creates possibilities of strengths regeneration. Tourism also releases from physical and psychological tiredness.

Definitions of tourism are well-known; the most popular is after World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) [10], but there are still doubts when taking into account the definition of recreation. Unfortunately, there is no agreement between scientists analyzing this phenomenon. In Webster's dictionary [8] recreation is defined as "the way of gaining entertainment or regeneration" as well as "regeneration of strengths and psychical condition after work". According to R. Winiarski recreation is "a sum of activities/behaviours that are taken up after professional, family and social duties. They are to relax, entertainment and psycho-social human development" [9].

### **TOURIST AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

Activity is understood as a form of physical effort and it is connected with the following various benefits: fun (after work relax, satisfaction from movement), health, lively social contacts as well as leisure management. Tourism and its new forms development as well as development of tourists' needs made it possible to create new areas of tourism phenomenon. There are people who spend their free time in a very active way therefore one can not call them mass or even passive tourists. Because of that, one can understand that active tourist is a person who "travel from his/her place of residence on recreation purpose in chosen tourist and sport disciplines. It can be treated as a hobby focused on fitness and intellectual development"

[4]. The authors want to underline that both tourist and recreational activities are taken up only in our free time.

Different forms of tourism and recreation bring invaluable benefits for development of young people, they stimulate their proper psycho- and physical development, they also create positive behaviours, enlarge positive approach towards various fields in our life. It is important to encourage children and youths to take part in tourism, sport and recreation because it helps in developing new abilities, it influences their psychical and physical health.

One of the most important factors influencing tourists' behaviours and decisions are tourism motives. According to K. Przeclawski "motive is a mechanism or a group of internal mechanisms causing and organizing human activities in order to meet people's needs" [7].

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH AREA

**Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski** lies in the south-east Poland and north-east part of Świętokrzyskie Province. It has gained city rights since 1613. It is the second, after Kielce, centre of Świętokrzyskie Province when taking into account its area and number of inhabitants. The city is the seat of local authorities for five neighbouring municipals.

## AIM, METHODS AND RESEARCH MATERIAL

The aim of the work is to assess tourist and recreational activity of young people from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski secondary schools. Diagnostic questionnaire was chosen as research method. The research were conducted in the following five secondary schools in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski:

- St. Staszic Secondary School No I,
- J. Chreptowicz Secondary School No II,
- Wł. Broniewski Secondary School No III,
- C. K. Norwid Secondary School No IV,
- Priest M. Popiel Catholic Secondary School.

Third class pupils took part in the questionnaire. They were asked to answer 21 questions concerning their tourist and recreational activity. The authors collected 80 questionnaires. The results were elaborated statistically and were presented in tables and graphs – the data made it possible to characterize pupils taking up tourist and recreational activity.

## SURVEY RESULTS ANALYSIS

Number of 80 pupils of secondary schools from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski and its neighbourhoods took part in the research. The majority of the respondents were women – it was 51% of the polled.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of the respondents

FEATURE	DIVISIONS, VARIANTS, NUMBERS, PERCENTAGE								
Sex	<b>Division</b>	<b>Women</b>				<b>Men</b>			
	<b>Number</b>	41				39			
	<b>(%)</b>	51%				49%			
Age	<b>Division</b>	18	19	18	19	18	19	18	19
	<b>Number</b>	25	16	32	7	32	7	32	7
	<b>(%)</b>	31%	20%	40%	9%	40%	9%	40%	9%
Place of residence	<b>Variant</b>	Village	City	Village	City	Village	City	Village	City
	<b>Number</b>	7	18	2	14	13	19	4	3
	<b>(%)</b>	8%	23%	3%	17%	16%	24%	5%	4%

Source: the authors' elaboration

The majority of all the respondents lived in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski (67% of the polled), the minority of the respondents came from villages (33%). About 40% of women live in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, whereas 11% women live in villages. Almost 28% of men live in the city and 21% of men – in villages.

Youths' preferences connected with active tourism are differentiated. The most popular forms of active tourism are as follows (table 2):

**Table 2.** Preferred forms of tourist activity

On.	Sex and number of respondents Answers	Women		Men		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Hiking	21	26,25	14	17,50	35	43,75
2	Bicycle tourism	16	20,00	12	15,00	28	35,00
3	Rafting/canoeing	1	1,25	-	-	1	1,25
4	Skiing	3	3,75	13	16,25	16	20,00
<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>51,25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48,75</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100,00</b>

Attention! N – number of answers

Source: the authors' elaboration

As mentioned above, the most popular form of active tourism since many years, not depending on sex – is hiking (almost 44% of the polled). The same form of tourism dominates among women as well (over 26% of the women respondents). However, the majority of men respondents claims that they like skiing very much. Probably, the reason is that skiing is connected with the bigger physical effort, while women prefer delicate forms of recreation.

After gaining all the information about preferred forms of tourist activity taken up by youths, it is worth to present the most popular means of transport (table 3).

**Table 3.** Means of transportation

On.	Sex and number of respondents Answers	Women		Men		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Car	25	31,25	30	37,50	55	68,75
2	Train	1	1,25	3	3,75	4	5,00
3	Coach	11	13,75	4	5,00	15	18,75
4	Plane	1	1,25	1	1,25	2	2,50
5	Ferry	1	1,25	1	1,25	2	2,50
6	Bicycle	2	2,50	-	0,00	2	2,50
<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>51,25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48,75</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100,00</b>

Attention! N – number of answers

Source: the authors' elaboration

From the table 3, it occurs that almost 70% of young people (not depending on sex) travel by car mostly. The second most important mean of transport chosen by the respondents is coach (almost 19% of the polled), and the third – train (5% of the respondents).

While making decision about the trip, we often have a dilemma what to choose. What in fact has the most significant influence on our trip and decision about the destination? The table 4 presents the answers for the question.

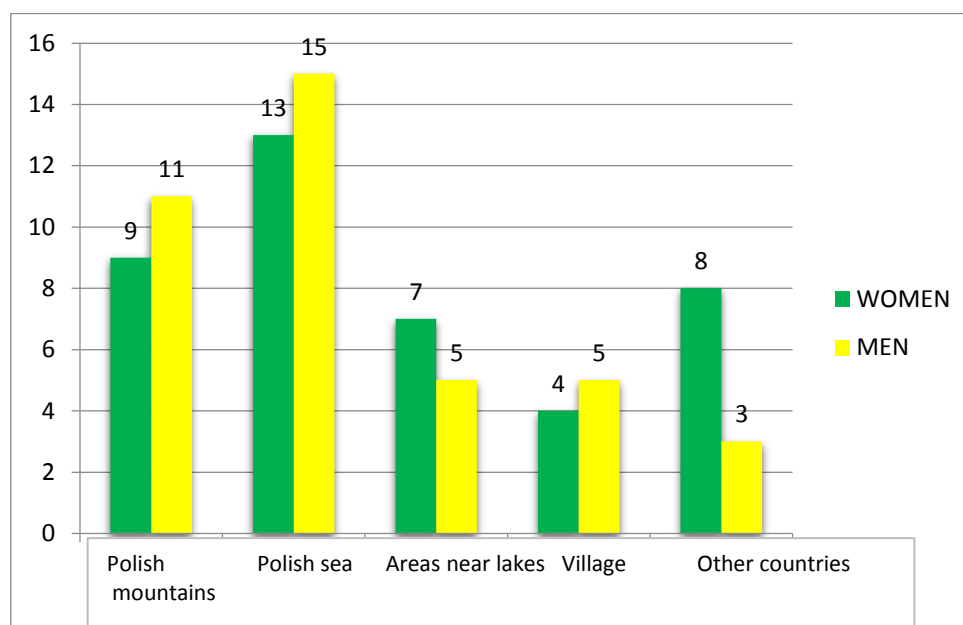
**Table 4.** Factors influencing the choice of active relax place

On.	Sex and number of respondents Answers	Women		Men		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Landscape	8	10,00	8	10,00	16	20,00
2	Climate	13	16,25	7	8,75	20	25,00
3	Presence of sport and recreational facilities	6	7,50	13	16,25	19	23,75
4	Conditions of living	6	7,50	1	1,25	7	8,75
5	Price	7	8,75	9	11,25	16	20,00
6	Distance	1	1,25	1	1,25	2	2,50
<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>51,25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48,75</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100,00</b>

Attention! N – number of answers

Source: the authors' elaboration

The data included in the table 4 give evidence that the most important factors influencing our decision concerning destination, differentiate according to sex. Women take into account weather conditions (over 16%), whereas men focus mainly on the existence of sport and recreational objects/infrastructure (over 16%). It confirms the thesis that women are more subtle and sensitive, while men see only the concrete aim – for instance the existence of the facilities needed for comfortable relax. It is worth to underline that men also (more often than women) take into account expenses of the trip (11%), while for women a great meaning has also a landscape and its beauty (10%).



**Graph 1.** Tourist destinations  
Source: the authors' elaboration

Graph 1 presents youths' preferences concerning tourist destinations. Polish sea (Baltic Sea) and mountains are more and more popular among the polled (60%). Areas near lakes as

well as foreign countries are popular among women – about 10% of them declare that they took part in foreign tourism, over 6% of men choose areas near lakes and village areas.

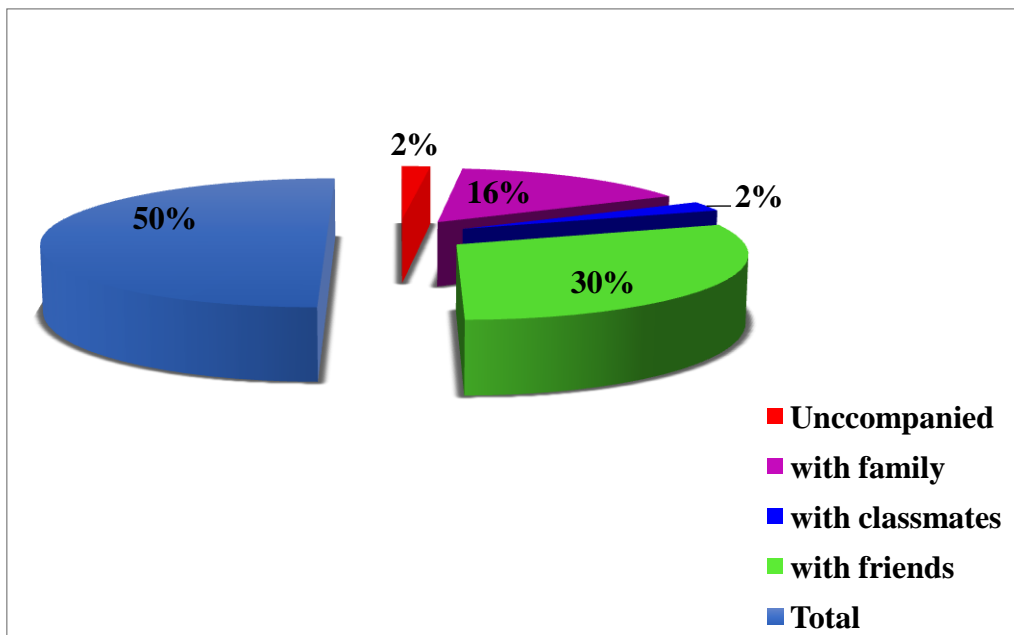
Table 5 shows ways of spending free time by young people in the chosen tourist destinations.

**Table 5.** Way of spending time in the destination

On.	Answers	Sex and number of respondents		Women		Men		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
1.	Sport and recreational active relax	11	13,75	19	23,75	30	37,50		
2.	Visiting of the most interesting culture places	11	13,75	6	7,50	17	21,25		
3.	Entertaining spending of free time	16	20,00	14	17,50	30	37,50		
4.	Passive relax	3	3,75	-	-	3	3,75		
<b>Total</b>		41	51,25	39	48,75	80	100,00		

Attention! N – number of answers  
 Source: the authors' elaboration

As one can see, the most dominating form of spending free time is “active sport and recreational relax” (37,5%) as well as “entertainment” (37,75%). Visiting the most interesting culture places is not as popular as an active relax (21,25%). “Passive relax”, for example watching TV was chosen by almost 4% of the polled. One can claim, that people prefer spending their time outside in an active way.



**Graph 2.** People with whom you spend your free time the most often  
 Source: the authors' elaboration

Over 60% of the respondents declare that they participate in travels in companion with friends, whereas 30% of the polled say that they travel with the family members. Merely 5% of the polled travel with the whole class (peers) and 4% - travel unaccompanied. The data testify that peers and family have a great impact on tourism decisions and travelling of young people.

Table 6 shows various forms of recreation that occur more and more often nowadays.

**Table 6.** Preferred forms of recreational activity

On.	Sex and number of respondents Answers	Women		Men		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Walking	10	12,50	4	5,00	14	17,50
2	Swimming	4	5,00	9	11,25	13	16,25
3	Dance	5	6,25	3	3,75	8	10,00
4	Riding a bike	13	16,25	6	7,50	19	23,75
5	Ice-skating	2	2,50	1	1,25	3	3,75
6	Playing tennis	1	1,25	6	7,50	7	8,75
7	Playing volleyball	2	2,50	5	6,25	7	8,75
8	Jogging	2	2,50	2	2,50	4	5,00
9	Aerobic	2	2,50		0,00	2	2,50
10	Playing football	-	-	3	3,75	3	3,75
<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>51,25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48,75</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100,00</b>

Attention! N – number of answers

Source: the authors' elaboration

The next analysis concerns factors influencing choice of tourist and recreational activity. The majority of the respondents claims that the willingness of improving their skills as well as great fun influence their mood in a positive way and it is an effective way of relax. About 16% of women and 6% of men want to try something new, 26% of men want to improve their skills, 25% of women declare great fun as a motive of taking up tourist and recreational activity. What is surprising, “the willingness to show off” as a motive of tourist and recreational activity was not mentioned by men.

More than half of the respondents (61%) take up tourist and recreational activity in small groups of people – up to 5 persons; lots of the respondents take the activity individually. Only 7% of the polled said that they take up the activity in a big group of people. It probably looks like this because of the age when peers influence each others.

Many people take up physical activity being inspired by other people or other stimulus. On the base of research material, one can claim that modern youths (almost 53% of the polled) first of all take into account peers' opinion. The respondents also pointed on other stimuli that influenced their decisions: “family” (almost 24%), “TV, Internet” (20%).

As it occurs from the answers' analysis, young people participate in a physical activity with pleasure. In connection with that one should point the importance of physical activity for the respondents.

Research results confirm that both men (42,5%) and women (40%) treat physical activity as a “pleasure”. Barely 12,5% of the polled pointed „reasonable spending free time” what shows their high awareness. It is important and consolatory information that a small number of the polled treat physical activity as a necessity.

Youths' life style has a significant impact on their healthy condition. One can claim that more than 50% of the polled (54%) assess their life as a “rather active one”. The fact is very edifying because it shows that young people are aware of their health and more and more often reach for physical activity. On the other hand, there are still people who prefer passive spending their free time and passive life style (6% of the polled). The respondents asked about the access to information and didactic materials concerning physical activity, claimed that it is on a mean level (49%); 24% of the polled said that the access is rather poor, and 5% - the access is bad.



## **SUMMARY**

The authors made an attempt to analyze tourist and recreational activity of secondary school students from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. The respondents prefer relax on attractive areas in aspect of climate.

Central Statistical Office' (CSO)<sup>13</sup> research show that within 1.10.2008.-30.09.2009. Polish people were active as the following: 23,7% of people took part in domestic short-term (up to 4 days) trips; 25,3% of people took part in domestic long-term travels (during holidays); and 7,7% of people travelled abroad and their stay lasted at least 2 days. When travelling during holidays, the most popular are holidays at the seaside (35% of the polled), on the second place were mountains (15,9%), next – village areas (14,9%) as well as tourist destinations (13,4%) [2]. Among students from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski the most popular trips are held at the seaside (35% of the respondents), then in the mountain areas (25%), about 14% of the respondents travel abroad and 11,25% of the polled choose village areas. One can see that preferences of Poles presented by CSO are very similar to preferences of pupils from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski secondary schools.

According to CSO, the most popular reason of not travelling are low incomes and lack of health [1]. Among pupils from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski the most often reason was lack of time (over 71%) and only 2,5% of the polled claimed that bad health condition makes it impossible to travel anywhere. The most popular way of spending free time in the destination among Poles was passive relax (68% of the polled), taking part in social meetings (41%), visiting historic places (33%), physical exercises and sport (23%) as well as watching TV (22%). The most popular activity during foreign travels was sightseeing (64% of the polled), passive relax (49%) as well as taking part in social meetings (54%). Only 11% of the polled pointed out physical exercises [1]. Among students from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski the most popular way of spending free time in the destination was entertainment (37,5%); the same percentage of the respondents said that they prefer active relax, which means sport and recreation. "The most interesting culture places" was popular enough among over 21% of the polled and only 3,75% of the respondents chose "passive relax".

Young people take up activity – 96% of the respondents declare that they lead active life. Moreover, 45% of the polled devote 1-2 hours per week on chosen physical activity. 54% of youths assess their life as "rather active"; 37% of the respondents pointed "active" life style. Young people treat their health very seriously and take up tourist and recreational activity more and more often. There were people who prefer passive life style (9% of the polled). Similar results [3] can be seen in Poznań and neighbours (152 boys and 234 girls) – 90% of the respondents pointed active relax during holiday camps. Additionally, according to K. Parzych [6] young people from Słupsk and Częstochowa make their relax conditional on the attractiveness of destination. Therefore, one can observe various forms of tourism and recreation during stays.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The analysis of the research material makes it possible to present the following conclusions:

1. The majority of the polled youths (44%) take up hiking, and about 35% of the them ride a bike;
2. More than 70% of the polled use car as a mean of transport, what encourages tourist trips with friends (60%) and with family (31%); about 19% of the respondents use a coach travelling with the class peers (5%) or unaccompanied (4%);

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<sup>13</sup> GUS – Główny Urząd Statystyczny (Central Statistical Office - CSO)

3. A crucial determinant when choosing destination for active relax is climate conditions; 24% of them take into account the existence of sport and recreational facilities; 20% of the polled focus on the beauty of landscape and price;
4. Baltic Sea and mountains are popular among 60% of the respondents; 10% of women and over 6% of men prefer areas near lakes and villages;
5. Almost 24% of the respondents ride a bike, 16% - walk, 18% - swim – as a physical activity;
6. Almost 94% of the polled declare that they take up physical activity;
7. The most popular reason of physical passiveness among young people is lack of time (over 70% of the respondents);
8. Over 45% of young people declare that they devote 1-2 hours a week for physical activity, 40% of the polled – 2-5 hours a week, only 15% - 5-10 hours a week – in most of cases it is rather a medium level of activity;
9. More than half of the respondents decide for physical activity because of great fun and improving their skills;
10. Students prefer taking up activity in small groups up to 5 persons (61% of the respondents);
11. Almost half of the respondents (49%) think that the access to information, equipment and didactic materials concerning physical activity is on a medium level.

The analysis makes it possible to create a model of modern man taking part in tourist and recreational activity. In connection with that, contemporary young tourist is an active person, who sees benefits of physical activity and movement, treating it as a pleasure and taking part in the activity in companion with friends and family. The most popular forms of tourism are as follows: hiking, riding a bike and many other modern forms.

To sum up, one can claim that tourist and recreational activity becomes a great tool for active relax among young people. Passive life style of the youths is not popular any more. In spite of stereotypes, they prefer spending their free time in an active way. The research also show that peers play a significant role in the development of awareness concerning physical activity and its benefits.

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