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## PREFERENCES OF CHILDREN OF YOUNGER SCHOOL AGE TOWARDS CAMPING

### Abstract

The younger school age is followed by turbulent changes, negative phenomena, with marked negative consequences that can lead to permanent deformations. Camping is a significant opportunity for organizing a part of teaching physical education. Its organization requires a positive attitude from the school system, parents and their children, which was the subject of this research. The sample in this research consisted of 252 pupils of the third and fourth grade, from two elementary schools from Belgrade. As a research instrument, Likert type questionnaire was used regarding children preferences to camping. More than four-fifths of the pupils express their desire to take part in camping. Almost one-third of the surveyed population have main motive for clean stay in nature, and more than a third like most being in nature. The most favored locations are the seashore, the river bank and the forest. More than half of the pupils prefer to go camping with a group of friends, while slightly less than a half is determined to stay on camp with parents. Of the program content, pupils are the most favorite: sports games, swimming, water sports and hiking. The significance of the obtained results is multiple useful from the point of view of the organization, which enables more efficient and longer-term profits provided by nature.

**Key words:** *fears, outdoor activities, organization*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The younger school age chronologically covers the period from the seventh to the eleventh year. This period is followed by the turbulent changes manifested through intense variations at the physiological and psycho-social level, with significant impacts of the educational process (Ugarković, 1996). Negative phenomena that may have a bad influence on the development of the child in the given period can be a long sitting in front of a TV, or computer and a longer stay in a closed space (Mitić, 2001). Negative consequences can be very serious, even they can lead to permanent deformations (Dražković, 2012). Therefore, it is very important to develop healthy habits in the younger school age (Višnjić, Jovanović, Miletić, 2004; Matić, Bokan, 2005), which will be adopted, which include proper nutrition, adequate rest, healthy sleep, physical activity and stay in nature. A child needs to "occupy" with healthy activities and not be exposed to the "hypnotic" effects of television, computers and other media, due to their well-known harmful influence (Bondžić, 2012).

*Camping is a form of teaching work, which is reflected in a longer stay in nature with sleeping under tents, and also in huts from the branch (Leskošek, 1971). Camping is part of the activities of the physical education program and is realized in the third thematic area called connecting physical education with life and work (Višnjić, Jovanović, Miletić, 2004).*

Camping back decades presents a significant opportunity for organizing a part of the teaching of physical education, but mostly due to the weaker material situation, and the inertia of the system, this form of teaching took place only in a few sporadic cases. The organization of camping requires a positive attitude from the school system, parents and their children.

The attitude implies a relatively lasting relationship towards whom or according to what, which is manifested as a tendency to think, feel and behave in a certain way. The attitude, as a mental disposition, affects perception, thinking and social behavior. In earlier research, the importance of attitudes was considered, where due to its expression of non-explicit and predictive power, the term of attitude is used in various areas of social sciences (Juhas, Orlić, Lazarević, Jankovic, Matić 2011). Attitudes are permanent systems of positive or negative assessment, feeling and tendency to take action for or against, and in relation to different objects (Rot, 2003).

The necessary condition for organizing camping is the positive attitude of parents, who should be convinced of the safety of their children, then to be convinced that their children will acquire certain skills and knowledge, and that a complete stay in nature will affect the improvement of their social life and health status. So far, research shows that a large percentage of parents (about 70%) would allow their children to go to organized school camps (Martinović, Branković, Pelemiš, 2013).

In addition to the positive parental attitude, the attitude of future campsite participants is also important. In previous research, positive attitudes towards staying in nature with students of Faculty of Sport and Physical Education (Dabović, Dobrijević, Miletić, Višnjić, Miletić, 2009), and students of The Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies (Vučković, Dopsaj, 2011) were recorded. Most results suggests that with age, there is a change in attitudes toward physical education, which shows that older students have less positive attitudes than younger ones (Lazarević, Orlić, Lazarević, Radisavljević-Janić, 2015).

In order to achieve the maximum effect of camping, it is necessary to obtain information about the wishes and expectations of children of the younger school age on camping, which is precisely the topic of this paper.

The subject of actual research is the reason for the positive attitudes of pupils of the junior primary school towards camping, as well as their affection for the organizational and program aspects of the camp, and also towards other participants as well as inevitable program contents.

## 2. METHODS

In this paper, the method of experimental research was used. A specially made questionnaire was used as an instrument, as well as a theoretical analysis of the content of scientific and professional literature with a causal method and the systematization of professional experience, using a logical, inductive and deductive way of concluding.

The sample in this research consisted of 252 students of the third and fourth grade, from five classes per elementary schools "Oslobodioci Beograda" and "Borislav Pekić" from Belgrade. In the selection, a method of a suitable sample was used.

A survey tool was used to collect data related to the subject of the research. The first part of the questionnaire was provided for general information. One part of the questionnaire (Bondžić, 2012) was used to collect data on how to conduct leisure time. In one segment of the questionnaire, pupils responded to negative attitudes towards staying at the campsite, and in the last section they gave information on how they would like to see the campsite they would go to.

The paper deals with the data closely related to the part of the questionnaire, about pupils' wishes, in which way camping should be organized, where they would take active participation.

Statistical data processing was done using statistical processing software "R" (R-project, 2017). During processing data, every question was a random variable. All variables were categorical and nominal.

The categories are factorized during processing data. The data is shown in the table. They are expressed by numbers and percentages.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the total of 252 interviewed students, 214 (84.9%) wrote that they would like to camp, while only 38 (15.1%) wrote that they would not like to camp (Table No. 1).

Table No. 1. Attitudes of pupils on campfire (Bondžić, 2012).

	would like to camp	would not like to camp
number of pupils	214	38
%	84,9	15,1

Those who wrote in the previous question that they would like to go to camping, 72 (28.6%) wrote that they would like to go to campsite because of nature, 56 (22.2%) because of socializing, 14 pupils (5,6%) due to clean air, 58 (23%) specified that they wanted to try something new, 5 of them (3.2%) emphasized a tent, 4 of them (1.5%) wrote that they would go because of plants and animals, 2 students (0.8%) likes night camping, 2 pupils (0.8%) caused the camp fire and 2 pupils (0.8%) as a reason lead on study of plants (Table No. 2). The reasons why pupils would like to go to camping are very diverse, but prevalent interests are characteristic for the examined age category. Most pupils would like to go to campsite because of their stay in a natural environment, which suggests that this age category has not yet lost its original connection to nature, and that this is the right moment for systematic formation of positive habits.

Table No. 2. Pupil's preferences to the camp environment and contents (Bondžić, 2012).

	<b>Number of pupils</b>	<b>%</b>
nature	72	28,6
socialization	56	22,2
clean air	14	5,6
wants to try something new	58	23
tent	5	3,2
animals and plants	4	1,5
night camping	2	0,8
camp fire	2	0,8
studying of plants	2	0,8

Table No. 3. A pupils answers on question, what they like most about camping (Bondžić, 2012).

	<b>Number of pupils</b>	<b>%</b>
don't know	11	4,4
nature	98	38,9
socialization	42	16,7
sports	4	1,6
sleeping in tent	41	16,3
clean air	12	4,8
physical exercise	2	0,8
hiking	4	1,6
camp fire	13	5,2
setting a tent	2	0,8
games	9	3,6
talking scare tales	3	1,2
nothing	6	2,4
swimming	2	0,8
solving problems in nature	3	1,2

Analysis of the processed data leads to the following observations: 98 pupils, representing in this case more than a third (38.9%) stated nature as the factor that they liked most when camping, 42 of them, that is, every sixth pupil mentioned socializing (16.7%), 41 students (16.3%) emphasized sleeping in the tent, 13 students (5.2%) identified camp fire and 12 pupils (4.8%) clean air. Each of the categories listed by the student is almost always a matter of every organized campsite. Nature, clean air, socializing around the camp fire - are essential elements of any camping, and from the obtained data it is clearly seen that the pupils would enjoy them (Table No.3).

The choice of location for organized stay is the most important step in the organization (Miletić, Davidović, Rajković, Tomašević, 2016, Miletić, 2016). Analyzing the values observed from the aspect of the desired site (Table No. 4), it is notable that most of the pupils 94 (37.3%) would sign the seashore. Banks of the river was chosen by 60 pupils (27%), while 58 (23%) chose forest. Based on the children's interest, it is concluded that it would be good if the camp for pupils will be of a mixed type (Stojanović, Savić, Miletić, 2013), that is, in such

a place, that they would be accessible to the forest for walking, exploring and familiarizing with the flora and fauna of the region, but also with water in which they could swim, cool and fun. In addition to this, it is necessary to meet the high criteria in front of all safety and technical preparations that favor the massive training of knowledge and skills (Mitrović, Rajković, 2017).

Table No. 4. Pupil's preferences for the location of the camp (Bondžić, 2012).

	<b>Number of pupils</b>	<b>%</b>
banks of the river	60	27
forrest	58	23
banks of the lake	30	11,9
seashore	94	37,3
nowhere	2	0,8

Regarding question about companionship during camping, 116 pupils (46%) would like to go with their parents, 128 (50.8%) of them with friends from the class, 6 (2.4%) with the friends with whom they train, while 2 students (0.8%) declared that they would not go with anyone (Table No. 5).

By analyzing the obtained data, it can be concluded that this younger school period shows desire for autonomy, and these tendencies need to be systematically supported and directed, in order to reflect these effects in everyday life and work of pupils (Miletić, 2016). This fulfills one of the basic goals of the educational process, which is an independent and mature person (Matić, Bokan, 2005).

Table No. 5. Pupils preferences for camping participants (Bondžić, 2012).

	<b>Number of pupils</b>	<b>%</b>
with parents	116	46
with friends from class	128	50,8
with friends from training	6	2,4
with nobody	2	0,8

The values from the table point to the fact that pupils decide for sport rather than walking - 29 of them (11.8%) would choose hiking, sports games would be most suitable for 79 pupils (31.3%), water sports 36 of pupils (14.3%), whereas 64 (25.4%) of pupils would be qualified for swimming. The conclusion that can be drawn from this, is that if summer camping for pupils will be organized in view of the rich variety of program contents (Miletić, 2011), it would be desirable if the camp will be close to some aquatory (rivers, lakes or sea), that the pupils' needs for swimming and sports activities on the water would be met. Sports facilities organized on land and hike would certainly be the default part of every camping (Table No. 6).

Table No. 6. Pupils' preferences according to the contents of the camping (Bondžić, 2012).

	Number of pupils	%
hiking	29	11,8
swimming	64	25,4
water sports	36	14,3
sport games	79	31,3
specified sport	10	4
soccial games	2	0,8
running	6	2,4
free time, games	5	2
fishing	3	1,2
Exploring nature	8	3,2
dont want to go	3	1,2
solving problems in nature	7	2,8

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The encouraging fact is, that 85% of the surveyed pupils express their desire to participate in camping, despite the modern trends in the sedentary lifestyle. Almost one-third of the surveyed population have motive for pure stay in nature, and more than a third most like camping because being in nature. The most favorite places where students would like to spend their time on camping are the seashore, the river bank and the forest. This knowledge favors the activation of unused and unrecognized potentials of the Republic of Serbia in the direction of the development of nautical tourism within the framework of inland waterways (Miletić, Trivun, 2017; Miletić, Rajković, Mitrović, 2017). More than half of the pupils prefer to go camping with a group of peers, while slightly less than a half is determined to stay on camping with parents. The examined age is therefore considered a crucial moment, important for the promotion of the positive influence of the peer subculture. Most favorite program contents, for pupils are: sports games, swimming, water sports and hiking. These contents favor the breakthrough of the barriers, which, through the common contents of the "exit from the comfort zone" in the conditions of relative freedom and security favor the preservation of curiosity, relieve pupils from fears and positively influence the manifestation of independence as the ultimate goal.

The significance of the obtained results is very useful from the point of view of the organization. Regardless of the dominant characteristics of camps that can be educational (Miletić, Miletić, Rajković, 2016), health-ecological (Li, 2010), and tourism, evaluation and self-evaluation of program contents is necessary (Miletić, Rajković, 2016) and the location itself, in order to create a positive attitude towards the pupils acquired at this school age, remains a permanent one for the whole of life. This will allow for a more efficient and long-term return to nature.

According to the conclusions, there is justification for the organization staying in nature (summer, wintering, camping ...), where pupils should not rely solely on the school system when it comes to organization. The prerequisites necessary for the organization of a teaching camp is the interest of children and the permissions of their parents. Desires and expectations of pupils are a very important factor for a successful organization, where it is necessary to meet the children's affinities in as high a percentage as possible, which will increase the effect of organized multi-day stay in nature, which ultimately results in the stimulation of creating a positive habit, periodic outdoor living.

The significance of the results of this research is also reflected in the dimension of market research, whereby the campsite needs to be adapted to the wishes of the participants, thus creating the possibility of a feedback in terms of human adaptation to nature.

Given that the previously mentioned criteria are met, the possibility of developing a new field of entrepreneurship in physical culture is opening up - Organization of private camps, camps and campuses according to the foreign model (Russian Federation, Scandinavia, Canada, etc.).

Educational camps in addition to school can be organized by sports clubs through preparations, which, in contrast to a specific approach, can be general, recreational and tourist character. It should be not neglected the possibility of establishing organizations that would deal solely with those activities. In addition, in the construction of sports and recreational facilities, it is necessary to keep in mind that their users can and should preferably be recreational and tourists (Rajković, Mitrović, Miletić, 2017).

Given the epidemiological level of hyperkinesias and the number of children of the younger school age in the territory of Belgrade (63,869) and the Republic of Serbia (265,402) according to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS, 2017), conclusions, ideas and proposals are gaining importance. In addition, there is a large number of unemployed educated personnel to whom space for professional work is opening.

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