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YOUTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: research on the attitudes of the youth of Split on environmental awareness and habits and activities related to environmental protection

Summary: Ecological topics have been the focus of numerous studies in various scientific fields for years. The global problem of waste management is closely related to this topic. A constant increase in waste, which can be linked with mass consumption and economic development, is recorded in Croatia as well. Being observed as a global problem of the entire society, waste disposal can be also look at from an individual's viewpoint who is responsible, after becoming ecologically aware, for reshaping its own behaviour and lifestyle in accordance with ecological values. The subject of the research is the ecological awareness of young people with the general aim of examining young people's attitudes towards environment and youth awareness of environmental protection, and in order to determine this, it was necessary to determine the lifestyle habits, the frequency of recycling, the ways they contribute to environmental protection, their attitudes about the importance of environmental care and the impact of residents on the environment. Furthermore, an assessment of the citizens level of education on environmental protection was carried out. The online questionnaire included a convenience sample of 480 voung people, 154 men and 326 women, in the city of Split, within the range of 18 to 29 years. From the results it is evident that, according to their assessment, the participants are conscientious toward the environment, often recycle paper and plastic, sometimes use eco products and dispose of waste in designated places. They criticize the (lack of) education of other citizens of Split when it comes to ecology, and they are also aware that waste disposal in Split is insufficient. When it comes to attitudes about waste disposal, air pollution and the education of other citizens, young people show that they are aware of the problems in the city Split. The ecological situation significantly affects the quality of life of an individual and society, so the results of this research can be understood within the framework of the set goals and results obtained from the conducted research. We can understand the research results as a guideline for work in the field of environmental awareness and environmental protection. Likewise, the results of the research are guidelines for the implementation of these topics through education and training of young people, but also of other age groups, so that the habits of young people (and citizens) of the city of Split, and accordingly their activities, change toward positive behavior in these areas in the future.

Key words: environmental awareness, habits of young people, attitude research, questionnaire, environmental protection

INTRODUCTION

Environmental protection is an inevitable topic in media nowadays. The media especially influence and play an important role in shaping environmental awareness, although Jakovljević (2021) expresses claims that media do not get enough attention from their consumers. On the other hand, it can be spotted that more and more attention via media has been directed towards different segment of ecological protection, possibilities of sustainable environment, urbanisation in the ecological context, but primarily education and raising awareness on the topic. The reason for the increasing media exposure of environmental issues could be found in the growing seriousness of the situation and the fact that the real consequences of global warming are visible in nature and the environment. Environmental protection is not just an ecological term, but an interdisciplinary issue that can be looked at from many perspectives and scientific areas when climate changes are spoken.

Besides pollution, consumption and mass production must be mentioned for its significant effect on environment. Furthermore, we enter politics and recent programs that focus on environmental protection and a "green" lifestyle. Environmental protection also enters urbanism and architecture that take into consideration sustainability of materials in construction and energy resources. European fonds offer more support for ecological production, sustainability, small business owners' survival, as well as agriculture and education in the field of environmental protection and awareness.

Societies are in all areas intertwined with nature. Using material resources and energy, they change landscapes, ambient, produce waste and burden the environment with toxic emissions (Reusswig, 1995). All acters participate in all those changes, from society to individuals and the widest systems. Because of that we can say that societal interactions and their behaviour are shaped by actions and individual behaviour (Jakovljević, 2021; Reusswig, 1995) and institution (Jakovljević, 2021; Tišma et al., 2003), as well as both of their impact.

When it comes to the environment, ecological consciousness ought to be mentioned (Ham et al., 2016; Miloš and Čiček, 2014; Prothero, 1990; Sarti and St. John, 2019; Schlegelmilch et al., 1996; Wierzbiński et al., 2021). Ecological consciousness or awareness can, in a wider context, be defined as an attitude on ecological consequences of human behaviour which include a positive attitude towards the environment and appropriate behaviour relevant to environment (Ham et al., 2016), as well as a state of consciousness, knowledge and awareness that surroundings where people live affects human development and "pre-ecological" (Harju-Autti and Kokkinen, 2014). Rising environmental awareness throughout all levels of society has become one of the main goals of today. The European Union makes significant effort providing financial resources to raise environmental consciousness in the member countries. In the line of its environmental policies, the European Environmental Agency (2005) has published a technical report ¹ in which they introduce the term of Environmental policy integration (EPI) as a concept that offers potential to avoid the negative effects and finding solutions that will be used.

However, human behaviour will depend on knowledge acquisition, values and achieved environmental consciousness, that can enable better life quality on a smaller or bigger community scale. But in a case of irresponsible human behaviour, lower quality of life can be expected (Jakovljević, 2021). When it comes to positive behaviour, authors Ham et al. (2016) in their paper mention two types of attitudes that are used for predicting "pro-ecological" behaviour (different activities for the benefit of the behaviour). It does not matter if individuals are ecologically aware because they will not necessary act "pro-ecological". On the example of consumerism, that would mean that someone who is ecologically conscious, is not necessary a

¹ EEA TEchnical report, no2/2005: *Environmental policy integration in Europe, State of play and an evaluation framework*. Vidi https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/technical report 2005 2

"green" consumer. With awareness aspect as the first step, a person should act in a certain way to become the one. It has been spotted in the research of Calušić and Holy (2017) that, for example, citizens of Osječko Baranjska county declare themselves as ecologically aware, even though their behaviour is not aligned with their attitudes. In the research of Miloš and Čiček (2014) made on the sample of students at of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture where the goal was to find out which type of motivation prevailed among students when choosing an engineering career related to ecological awareness. The results show a mediocre level of environmental consciousness and practices. On the other hand, the domination of extrinsic motivation for a career (e.g., good, or above average paycheck, working abroad, fast career progression) does not jeopardize interest for environmental problems and practices. Kalambura et al. (2016) carried out a survey on awareness levels, the importance of recycling and ecological issues on the sample of 89 students of Faculty of Velika Gorica. The research showed that only about half the students sort waste, mostly paper and cardboard, PET bottles and glass. Besides they concluded that there were not enough specialized containers for waste disposal. Regarding the relationship between gender and an environmentally friendly, healthy and sustainable lifestyle, in the research of Širola and Čavlin (2019), it was observed that woman are more inclined towards an environmentally friendly, healthy and sustainable lifestyle. This was especially observed in partially conscious subjects.

In the case of unevolved ecological consciousness, as a consequence opposite behaviour appears. That sort of behaviour, according to Jakovljević (2021) involves irresponsible acting that jeopardises the environment, and divides individuals in a group that leads to smaller or bigger ecological crisis. Waste issues are among the biggest problems in the world. One of the biggest environmental issues in Croatia is inadequate waste management. With the growth of consumerism and population rise, there is an increase in the amount of wrongly disposed products (Čalušić and Holy, 2017, p. 84). The recorded growth of waste (Čalušić and Holy, 2017; Stanić and Buzov, 2010) can be related to skyrocketing consumption and economic development. Stanić and Buzov (2010) in their paper state data from the Agency for Environmental Protection according to which in 1995. Croatia reported accumulated 987 542 tons of waste, moreover the amount grew to 1 172 534 tons in 2000. In 2019, Croatia produced 1 811 617 tons of waste which is a 2% increase compared to 2018 (Stanić and Buzov, 2010, p. 276). The only decrease was seen from 2008. - 2010. that colud be attributed to the economic crisis of that time, and in 2014. compared to 2013 when there was a slight decline of 4.8% (Čalušić and Holy, 2017, p. 86). According to the record of the government of Croatia², between 1995. - 2020. there was a positive step forward when it comes to waste production and management, reusing and recycling, as well as education on the mentioned issues. The data shows that the economic growth in that period was faster than the increase of waste quantity. Some examples of campaigns that The Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund ran for the purpose of educating and informing the public were "Za ljepšu našu" with the purpose of encouraging waste sorting, recycling, reusing, composting, and lowering food waste, and the campaign "Ne zaboravi me" aimed towards lowering the use of disposable trash bags, and "I bez ukrasnog papira dar u srce dira" focused on reducing waste at holidays. In the application for units of local governing, available on the website Portal for Preventing Waste Production of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, there were 620 projects/activities applied and run by counties and cities in 2019. and 2020. Nonetheless, although the waste problem is looked at as a global problem, it is mostly dependent on individuals that must get aware and decide to live an ecological lifestyle and behaviour.

Although 20 years ago it was hard to find an example of sustainable development in real life (Cifrić, 2005), today there are some that made that happen. The company A1 Croatia, which is part of the Telecom group, as one of the leading telecommunication businesses from

² Vlada Republike Hrvatske (2021). *Odluka o donošenju Izmjena Plana gospodarenja otpadom Republike Hrvatske za razdoblje 2017.-2022. godine.* Vidi https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2022 01 1 1.html

their beginning they have been vocal about sustainability being one of their primary goals. To achieve sustainability, A1 founded a framework strategy of sustainable development that implements the use of renewable energy resources, smart technology, waste management and circular economy. An important factor for accomplishing sustainability is educating employees, supporting volunteerism and riding bicycles as a primary transportation vehicle to and from work. Additionally, they run a campaign called "Net Zero" to raise awareness on global warming and climate change (United Nations Global Compact, 2021, p. 14). Big corporations like A1 that have a significant effect on the public must be the carriers of change and examples of how possible it is to operate a business sustainably.

As it was previously mentioned, for a change in behaviour to happen is crucial to change consciousness and values, the aim that can be accomplished by education. In literature diverse ways of defining ecological education can be found. Ecological education according to Cifrić "...the only one, but very important, mediating mechanism that shapes the "image of the world" and "image of mankind"; moreover, it is necessary because she comes from people's position in society and position in nature. Education – especially the education system – is important for preparing young generations in accepting and transferring a "new image" (Cifrić, 2005, p. 329/330). Taylor et al. (2009) consider it of outmost importance in the fight against destruction and further degrading of the environment by effective education about ecological issues, whether it is formal or informal.

Regarding ecological education and the ways of its development the focus should be set on problem solving, critical thinking, skill development and team work, information research, as well as evolving interaction skills. The gist of contemporary environmental education is in the interdisciplinary aspect of ecological topics throughout all subjects, as well as learning through experience and adapting multiple methods, actively taking measures in each one's community (Jukić, 2011, p. 280).

Kristinić Nižić and Zubović (2016) research results show that participants express their dissatisfaction in statements that their city should be cleaner and more maintained, but they do see that it is on them as citizens to take care more. They agree that an exceedingly small number of citizens take care of the environment, or rather recycle waste and act to preserve urban ecology. This data shows that the city of Rijeka is still in a disadvantaged position when it comes to waste management from authorities and communal services, as well as citizens. In Ilišin (2011) research which delves into the values of young people in Croatia, preserving the natural environment and areas was only on the 7th place of priorities of the Croatian politics based on opinions of young people in 2004.

Furthermore, Jukić (2013) in an analysis of high school programs regarding ecological orientation, a survey conducted on 591 students and 190 high school professors from Osječko-baranjska county about their estimation of representation and appropriateness of ecological segments, acknowledges that within their subjects student mostly learn about this topic in biology, geography and chemistry, which is expected due to their goals leaning towards considering the environment and ecology problems. It is clear that there is not enough talk about ecology and environmental problems, so there should be an interdisciplinary approach adequate to consider ecological upbringing, considering that this research brought attention of the placement of these topics in the natural sciences area.

Ziesemer et al. (2021) conducted research on the sample of young people aged 14 to 24 in which they focused on their characteristics regarding consumerism. By interviewing 55 participants, the researchers concluded that a big problem when it comes to using eco-friendly products. The high price tag that comes with them and for young people who are often unemployed and financially dependent on their parents, this is not a priority. However, Prothero (1990) in his paper showed that 27% of grown Brits were willing to pay up to 25% more for ecologically acceptable products.

All pointed realisations indicate the fact that there is a space act positively on the behaviour and habits of citizens when it comes to the dimension of ecology and the environment. Although positive developments can be observed (Jukić, 2011; *United Nations*

Global Compact, 2021), and although we can find some admirable examples in society regarding pro-ecological behaviours, the situation is still not satisfying.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Environmental protection is an important topic for all levels of the society. Reading the literature, it was observed that there is insufficient representation of works dealing with young people on the topic of environmental awareness, habits and activities related to environmental protection. Given that young people are a social group that largely shapes the future, we were interested in the youth opinions regarding the environment as well as their ecological behavioural habits. Data was gathered *online* so as to reach the largest number of participants, with the survey including the citizens of Split between the ages of 18 and 29 and being conducted in April of 2021. The research included a convenience sample of 154 men and 326 women, or 480 young people in total. Given that this is a convenient sample, it is important to note that the results cannot be generalized to the entire population. The general goal was to determine the youth attitudes towards environment and their knowledge of environmental protection.

Specific goals were also set with the goal of determining lifestyle habits relevant to ecological behaviour, recycling frequency, and ways in which youth can contribute to environmental protection. Specific goals also included opinions on the importance of care for the environment and on the influence that citizens have on the environment.

Gathered data were processed and analysed in the SPSS statistical software package with methods and procedures of descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The scope of descriptive statistics covered indicators in the form of percentages of socio-demographic and socio-economic attributes, variables of ecological awareness estimations, estimations of personal habits and education of participants, estimations of the environmental situation in the city of Split, as well as estimations of the environmental protection education levels of the citizens of Split. Within the scope of inferential statistics, for the purpose of testing statistical significance of differences and correlations, a *chi-squared test* was used to test statistical significance of the dependence of one nominal variable on another nominal variable, while a *Mann-Whitney U* test was used for testing the statistical significance of the dependence of two nominal variables, of which the dependent variable is the scale used, while the independent variable is a qualitative one that exists in two forms. differences between two groups of a quantitative variable.

Posited hypotheses tested with statistical tests in the SPSS software for statistical data processing were as follows:

H1: estimations of ecological awareness will differentiate based on gender

H2: frequency of recycling habits will differentiate based on the level of education

H3: habits of waste disposal will differentiate based on gender

PARTICIPANTS

The research included a total of 480 participants, of which 154 (32.1%) were men, while 326 (67.9%) were women. A total of 358 (74.6%) participants belonged to the age group of 18-24, while 122 (25.4%) participants belonged to the age group of 25-29.

Regarding socio-demographic and socio-economic attributes, a little over a half of all participants were unemployed (56.3%), while almost a third (28.7%) were employed, with 16% of them employed as students, another 18.5% permanently employed, and 9.2% were on temporary employment. As their main source of income, a bit under half of all students listed allowance from parents (44.6%) and self-financing (38.8%). Besides allowance and self-financing, 15.2% of participants were scholarship recipients. Regarding costs of life, most (27.9%) participants were able to cover the costs only partially, while less than a fifth (18.8%) covered all the costs, with a similar amount (17.7%) being unable to cover the costs. Over half of all participants (61.3%) lived with their parents, while more than a tenth (15%) lived with

roommates and (14.4%) with partners, and the smallest amount lived alone (9.2%). Over half of all participants (57.9%) had only a high school diploma, while 30.8% had a bachelor's, and 10.4% had a master's degree. Only 0.8% had just a middle school diploma.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

While exploring environmental topics in the context of youth, we focused on self-reported perceptions of ecological awareness, ecological habits, means of education, environmental situation in the city of Split and the perception of other citizens. Results of the survey suggest that most participants consider themselves eco-conscious (53.8%). A little more than a third of the participants (37.1%) was unsure and less than 10% considered themselves not eco-conscious. The question about lifestyle habits had a large number of participants (67.7%) respond that they live in a way that positively impacts the environment, while a third (32.3%) considers their habits to have a negative impact. The first posited hypothesis contrasted the variable of eco-consciousness with the variable of gender. A *chi-squared* test confirmed there are no statistically relevant differences between the two variables (p>0.05), or that there are no differences between male and female participants when it comes to their assessment of eco-consciousness (Table 1). It is is not robust to the sample size.

Table 1.

gender					
	male	female	total		
f	20	24	44		
%	45,5%	54,5%	100%		
f	55	123	178		
%	30,9%	69,1%	100%		
f	79	179	258		
%	30,6%	69,4%	100%		
	f % f f %	gena male f 20 % 45,5% f 55 % 30,9% f 79 % 30,6%	gender male female f 20 24 % 45,5% 54,5% f 55 123 % 30,9% 69,1% f 79 179 % 30,6% 69,4%		

Results of the chi-squared test on variables of eco-consciousness and gender

□=3.978; df=2; p=0,137

Eco-consciousness can be shown by acts that represent ecologically responsible behaviour, the most notable of which is recycling. Regarding the frequency of recycling among participants, the most significant data showed that plastic (20.8%) and paper (17.7%) were the largest groups of recycled materials on a daily basis, with weekly habits being similar. The results partially correspond to the results of the study by Kalambura et al. (2016), that showed how only half of all students sorted waste, and that they primarily sorted paper and cardboard, plastic bottles and glass. On a monthly basis, the largest group of recycled materials are textile materials (43.5%) and batteries (38.3%), followed by paper (35.8%) and plastic (33.5%). Most participants have never recycled metal (69.4%), while more than a half (53.3%) never recycles batteries, biodegradable waste (52.7%), textile (48.1%), and glass (46.5%) (Table 2).

Table 2.

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	ne	ver	monthly		weekly		daily	
recycling	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
paper	122	25,4	171	35,6	102	21,3	85	17,7
plastic	113	23,5	161	33,5	106	22,1	100	20,8
metal	333	69,4	104	21,7	28	5,8	15	3,1
glass	223	46,5	129	26,9	81	16,9	47	9,8
biodegradable waste	253	52,7	106	22,1	64	13,3	57	11,9
textile	231	48,1	209	43,5	32	6,7	8	1,7
batteries	256	53,3	184	38,3	26	5,4	14	2,9

The second hypothesis explored the difference between recycling habits among participants with various levels of education. The variable of the achieved level of education (middle school, high school, bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctoral degree) was recoded into two categories: higher level of education (bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctoral degree) and lower level of education (middle school and high school). It is necessary to consider that the most participants between the ages of 18 and 24 (74.6%) were undergraduate students during the survey, so they have not yet officially finished their higher education, which is why they were listed among the group with lower-level education. The results presented in Table 3 show that there are no differences between participants of differing levels of education when it comes to recycling paper, plastic, metals, biodegradable waste, textile, and batteries. However, a difference in the habit of recycling glass was noticed between the two levels of education. Participants with a higher level of education (bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctoral degree) recycled glass more often than participants with a lower level of education (middle school, high school) (Table 3).

Table 3.

Differences in recycling habits of participants with lower-level education (N=282) and higher-level

education (N=198) among the youth of Split (Mann-Whitney U test)

recycling lower-level of higher-level of			education
	recycling	lower-level of	higher-level of
education education		education	education

			Mean			Mean				
	Md	IQR	Rank	Md	IQR	Rank	U	Z	р	r
paper	2,0	2	236,08	2,0	1	246,79	26672,000	0,867	0,386	0,0
	0	2		0						4
plastic	2,0	2	233,92	2,0	1	249,87	26062,500	1,287	0,198	0,0
	0	2		0						6
metal	1,0	1	235,98	1,0	1	246,94	26646,500	1,052	0,293	0,0
	0	1		0						5
glass	1,0	1	229,40	2,0	2	256,31	24787,000	2,238	0,025	0,1
	0	1		0	2					
biodegrada	1,0	1	237 74	1,0	2	244 43	27139 500	0 568	0.570	0,0
ble waste	0	1	237,74	0	2	244,43	27139,300	0,508	0,570	3
textile	2,0	1	242,22	2,0	1	238,05	27433,000	0,361	0,718	0,0
	0	1		0	1					2
batteries	1,0	1	241,73	1,0	1	238,75	27572,000	0,260	0,795	0,0
	0	1		0	1					1

As mentioned, recycling has a significant role in solving the issue of waste and achieving sustainable growth, which is why it is necessary to inform the citizens of the problem and encourage them to recycle. Acquired data shows that there is a space for improvement, especially because the Splitsko-dalmatinska county is one of the counties with the lowest rate of recycling municipal waste $(4\%)^3$. Although, when it comes to disposed amounts of biodegradable municipal waste in 2021, the Splitsko-dalmatinska county had the largest amount of disposed material $(19.7\%)^4$ and Split is near the bottom on the list of the cities with data on sorted waste disposal.⁵ For comparison, the rate of sorted wasted disposal in the year 2020 was 28.8%, while the municipality of Breznički Hum had a rate of 79.76% during the same period.

Vidi:

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on:

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³ Ministarstvo gospodarstva i održivog razvoja (2022). *Izvješće o komunalnom otpadu za 2021. godinu*. Vidi:

https://www.haop.hr/sites/default/files/uploads/dokumenti/021_otpad/Izvjesca/komunalni/OTP_Izvje%C5%A1%C4 %87e%200%20komunalnom%20otpadu%20za%202021.%20godinu FV.pdf

⁴ Ministarstvo gospodarstva i održivog razvoja (2022). *Izvješće o komunalnom otpadu za 2021. godinu*.

https://www.haop.hr/hr/provjera-podataka-o-komunalnom-otpadu-za-2020-godinu/provjera-podataka-o-komunalnom -otpadu-za-2020

However, if Split is compared with the cities the from top of the list, the city of Krk with a rate of 62.67%⁶ can be set as a good example.

Education in ecology is required to solve the problem of waste. By educating citizens on environmental protection, the awareness of existing problems can be raised, and ecologically positive behaviour can be encouraged. In the light of the considerations, results have shown the exact opposite, with most participants (70.8%) believing that the citizens of Split are uneducated when it comes to environmental protection. The data should be considered motivation to encourage and implement education in ecology.

A bit over half of all participants (55.6%) considers Split to be an inadequately cleaned city and half of all participants (51%) believes that Split does not have enough space for waste disposal, which was similarly shown in the work of Kalambura et al. from 2016., where they determinet that the students of Velika Gorica believe that there are generally not enough specialized containers for waste disposal. In the largest distributions, the participans believe that they are not adequate for assessing the work of communal services (47.9%), they cannot assess whether the air in the city of Split is polluted or not (46.5%) and that they cannot determine whether the city encourages the use of public transport, bicycles and other eco-friendly transportation methods (40%) (Table 4). If we want the city and the environment to be clean, "pro-ecological" behaviour changes are necessary. As a result, it is not enough to simply impact citizen attitudes but their behaviour as well. However, although it is the responsibility of everyone to inform themselves on ecological topics and change their behaviour accordingly, not everything rests on individuals. State and local governments need to be the foundation for change since citizens cannot act "pro-ecologically" if they do not have the conditions necessary to do so.

Table 4.

Presentation of the participant's views on aspects of the city of Split

	n	0	t know,	know, yes		
claim			can't	assess		
	F	%	f	%	f	%
air in Split is unpolluted	177	36,	223	46,5	80	16,
		9		,		7
Split is being cleaned enough	267	55,	159	33,1	54	11,
	207	6	107			3
municipal services are doing their job	124	27,	220	47.0	11	24,
	154	9	230	47,9	6	2
6 See		dana	L			on
https://www.haop.hr/hr/provjera-podataka-o-komunalr	nom-otpadu-za-2020	-godinu	/provjera-	podataka-	o-komu	unalnom
-otpadu-za-2020						

citizens of Split are educated enough about eco-consciousness	340	70, 8	120	25	20	4,2
Split has enough ecospaces for sorting and disposing	245	51,	151	31,56	84	17,
waste	243	0				5
Split encourages the use of public transport, bicycles	152	31,	102	40	13	28,
and other eco-friendly transportation	155	9	192	40	5	1

When asked about their habits, most participants never leave waste outside of designated spaces or in nature (63.7%), while less than half of participants sometimes use eco-products (43.5%). A quarter of participants sorts waste often (25.4%), while a quarter sorts only sometimes (27.3%). When it comes to picking up waste from public spaces that are not designated for waste disposal, a considerable number of participants will sometimes (32.1%) or rarely (32.1%) pick it up (Table 5). Answers that participants gave to these questions show a certain improvement in "pro-ecological" behaviour, although data on usage of eco-products corresponds to the results of Ziesemer et al. (2021), especially because both studies include youth that are financially dependent on their parents. Improvements can be made by informing the youth on eco-products and ways to change their own habits. For example, a simple linen shopping bag can reduce the amount of plastic being disposed of in nature, and long-term they are cheaper than plastic bags.

Table 5.

	never		never rarely sometimes		often		always								
frequency	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%					
disposing waste outside of	206	63,	121	27,	22	67	7	15	4	0					
designated areas	306	7	131	3	32	32 0,7	/	1,5	4	,8					
using eco-products	22	67	154	32,	200	13 5	75	15,	1	2.1					
	52	0,7	134	1	209	43,3	15	6	0	2,1					
sorting waste	70	14,	01	19,	121	27.2	100	25,	6	13,					
	/0	6	91	0	131	27,3	122	4	6	8					
picking up waste	101	21,	154	32,	154	22.1	52	11,	1	20					
	101	0	154	1	154	154	154	154	32,1	32,1	154 32,1	53	0	8	3,8

Overview of waste disposal habits and eco-product usage among participants

In light of the gathered data, the third hypothesis explored the differences in waste disposal habits between genders. Results gathered via the *Mann-Whitney U* test showed that there is a statistically significant difference between genders in the first two statements. The data for disposing waste outside of designated areas shows that male participants more often dispose of waste in nature, or undesignated places, than female participants. It has been determined that female participants use eco-products daily significantly more often than male participants. Finally, the *Mann-Whitney U* test determined that there is no statistically significant difference in the separation of waste (paper, plastic, metal, glass, textile...) with regard to gender and in the habits of collecting waste that is disposed outside the designated place for it (Table 6).

Table 6.

						gen	der			
waste disposal		male	2		fema	ıle				
habits		IOD	Mean	MJ	IQ	Mean	T	7		
	Ma	IQK	Rank	Ma	R	Rank	U	L	р	r
disposing of										
waste in nature	1.0			1.0						
or outside	1,0	1	256,92	1,0	1	232,75	22574,000	2,100	0,036	0,1
designated	0			0						
areas										
daily use of	2,0	1	207.00	3,0	1	256.33	19943 000	3 876	0.001	0,1
eco-products	0	-	201,00	0	-	200,00	177 10,000	2,070	0,001	8
sorting waste	3.0			3.0						0.0
(paper, plastic,	0	2	222,93	0	2	248,80	22395,500	1,957	0,050	9
metal)	Ū			0						,
picking up										
waste disposed	2.0			2.0						0.0
of outside of	2,0	2	231,23	2,0	1	244,88	23674,500	1,047	0,295	5
designated	U			U						3
areas										

Differences in waste disposal habits between men (N=154) and women (N=326) (Mann-Whitney U test)

Finally, we were interested in the ways of education the youth of Split used to educate themselves on the environment. Most young people educate themselves via documentary shows

(76.5%), while less than half educate themselves via scientific sources (48.3%), which is an important fact that tells us how to reach and educate the youth, as well as what type of content would be best suited for raising awareness of the environment. A third of all participants educates themselves via classes and lectures (31.9%), while the lowest number of participants educates themselves through seminars (15.8%) and workshops (12.7%) (Table 7). The presented results indicate a lack of topics about the environment, environmental protection, habits and activities aimed at pro-environmental behaviour precisely in educational institutions where young people spend a lot of time.

Table 7.

Overview of means of environmental education

	NC)	YES		
education on ecology	f	%	F	%	
seminars	404	84,2	76	15,8	
lectures	327	68,1	153	31,9	
workshops	419	87,3	61	12,7	
scientific sources	248	51,7	232	48,3	
documentary shows	113	23,5	367	76,5	

CONCLUSION

Environmental protection, sustainable growth and related topics have been a part of the agenda of governments and governing bodies for a long time, as well as private and state institutions and organizations. However, environmental protection is a topic that affects actors on both micro and macro levels. Raising awareness of the environment contributes to the improvement of the society in its entirety and to a higher quality of life. Awareness can be raised via education, formally as part of the curriculum or informally in the form of children's cartoons that deal with the topic of environment. The youth as a social group that informs itself of environmental protection via documentaries can be considered a part of the society that should not be ignored when it comes to education regarding these topics. While it should be taken into account that their sustainable life is being hindered by unemployment and financial dependence on their parents, the fact that should not be neglected is that they are a social group still being educated, who will raise future generations one day.

This research has gathered the opinions regarding the attitude toward the environment of the youth of Split. The survey covered the ecological habits of the youth, the opinions of the participants on their own contributions to the environmental issues of Split, as well as their general opinion on the environmental situation in Split. According to the results of the results of the survey, young participants consider themselves to be eco-conscious, often recycle paper and plastic, sometimes use eco-products and dispose waste at designated areas. Young people mostly believe that the citizens of Split are not educated about environmental protection. Besides education, youth think there are not enough spaces for waste disposal in Split, which points a finger at the government's actions.

The level of ecological coordination has a significant impact on the quality of life. Although young people, in the largest distributions, assess their habits as ecologically positive and are considered environmentally conscious, they assess the ecological habits of other citizens as negative, which indicates that young people are aware of the environmental problems that exist in the city of Split, such as the lack of designated areas for waste disposal or the inadequate ecological education of citizens. The results of this research can serve as the guidelines for the citizens of Split with the goal of improving the environment of the city via education and changing habits that negatively impact the environmental situation. The results can also be interpreted as constructive criticism of the city and state authorities since waste disposal areas, education, and encouragement of eco-friendliness are the topics often mentioned during election campaigns, but rarely realised once an option comes to power.

The limits of this research as well as the guidelines for future research on the same topic can be widened to include groups of all ages and their habits, as well as a survey of all recyclable materials, for the purpose of achieving more accurate results. Likewise, the advice for some future research is to explore these topics from a gender perspective, since there are certain differences between men and woman. It is also necessary to survey the habits of citizens regarding ecological behaviour and the (non)existence of communication with state and local authorities regarding these topics.

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