

Analysis of the Attitudes of Lithuanian Academic Youth Towards Environmentally Responsible Behaviour when Travelling

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Abstract— In the article, the authors analyse the attitudes of Lithuanian academic youth towards environmentally responsible behaviour when travelling. The purpose of the article is to analyse the attitudes of Lithuanian academic youth towards environmentally responsible behaviour when travelling. The research was carried out by means of a quantitative survey (questionnaire). Data collection methods - analysis of scientific literature and sources and questionnaire survey. The article analyses the attitudes of Lithuanian academic youth towards environmentally responsible behaviour when travelling and presents the results of the research conducted. It is concluded that all respondents have heard more or less about the principles of environmentally responsible travel. Most respondents, depending on the situation or the purpose of the trip, try to choose environmentally friendly and sustainable means of transport, and apply various sustainable actions when traveling: avoid plastic, try to support local businesses and culture, etc. When staying in accommodation facilities, respondents also try to behave responsibly and sustainably: save water and electricity, use room heating and cooling services sustainably, etc. Most respondents positively evaluate environmentally responsible behavior when traveling, but even half of the respondents are not ready to pay more for a sustainable trip. In summary, young people's attitudes towards travel and its impact on environmental responsibility are dynamic and constantly changing. These trends show that young people are ready to seek sustainable solutions and take responsibility for their actions to protect the planet for future generations.

Keywords - *academic youth, environmentally responsible behaviour, attitudes of academic youth, travels, future generation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Young people's attitudes to travel and their impact on environmental responsibility is an important issue that encompasses both cultural and social aspects. Today's young people are increasingly confronted with environmental problems and want to actively contribute to solving them. In this article, we will discuss how travel can influence young people's attitudes towards the environment and environmental responsibility. Young people are traveling more than ever before, using easily accessible transportation such as airplanes, trains, and rental cars, but these trips often have a negative impact on the environment - increasing carbon emissions, consuming resources, and contributing to biodiversity loss. As a result, young people are increasingly starting to value sustainable travel alternatives such as ecotourism, traveling by public transport or walking.

Social networking and the Internet allow young people to share their travel experiences and discoveries. This promotes awareness of environmental issues, as most young people are interested not only in the pleasures of travel, but also in its impact on the environment. Youth blogs, Instagram and YouTube channels often highlight the values of a responsible traveler and encourage them to choose sustainable and environmentally friendly forms of travel. Young people are also increasingly involved in initiatives that promote environmental responsibility. These can include various campaigns aimed at reducing the use of plastic, preserving nature, and promoting sustainable tourism. Such initiatives not only help young people understand their impact on the environment, but also inspire them to become active problem solvers.

Online ISSN 2256-070X

<https://doi.org/10.17770/etr2025vol1.8694>

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Topic relevance. The issue of responsible consumption is relevant nationally and internationally. The issue of responsible consumption is particularly relevant for EU countries in the transition to a circular economy. The global public interest in responsible consumption is demonstrated by the ratification of the Paris Agreement (adopted in 2016) and the development of the United Nations (hereinafter - UN) Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter - SDGs, adopted in 2015), which aim to balance the environmental, social and economic aspects of development with the help of 17 sustainable development goals and strive not only to reduce, but also to eradicate global poverty (UN WTO, 2015). The 12th Sustainable Development Goal is "Responsible Consumption and Production" - promoting resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure and access to basic services, green and decent jobs, and a better quality of life for all. UNESCO defines responsible consumption as the use of services and products that meet basic needs and ensure a better quality of life for people. Choosing to consume responsibly reduces the use of natural resources, reduces pollution, saves energy and protects workers and consumers. On 25 March, 2021, the European Parliament adopted the EU Sustainable Tourism Strategy [14], which sets out the principles for the development of a sustainable and responsible tourism sector. One of the objectives of the National Progress Plan 2021-2030 [15] is to better exploit the potential of the tourism sector for the country's progress - in accordance with the principles of sustainability and by applying innovative solutions, digitalization opportunities and specialized services for specific markets and target groups. This study aims to reveal the attitudes of academic youth towards responsible consumption while traveling.

Our quality of life, well-being and economic growth depend on our ability to live ecologically. Every year, responsible consumption and sustainability are increasingly promoted and the damage caused to nature and people by irresponsible consumption is highlighted. Residents of European countries are trying to contribute to various initiatives and are becoming more aware of environmental and ecological issues. People are increasingly choosing services and goods that are sustainable and nature-friendly. The scientific problem of this study is formulated as a question - what is the attitude of Lithuanian academic youth towards environmentally responsible behavior when traveling? Responsible consumers and users not only understand their rights, but also follow social and environmental standards, aiming to create an environment that is favorable for everyone and to ensure consumption with minimal impact on the environment. The goal of environmentally responsible consumption is to improve life on the planet, contribute to the quality of life of people around the world and future generations, therefore it is very important to analyze the attitude of academic youth towards responsible consumption when traveling, because travelers are most often a more consuming part of society.

The object of the study is the attitude of Lithuanian academic youth towards environmentally responsible behavior while traveling.

The aim of the study is to conduct an analysis of the attitude of Lithuanian academic youth towards environmentally responsible behavior while traveling.

Research objectives:

- To conduct an analysis of the attitude of academic youth towards environmentally responsible behaviour while traveling from a theoretical perspective.
- To conduct a study of the attitude of Lithuanian academic youth towards environmentally responsible behaviour while traveling.

Methodology. The study conducted a quantitative study (questionnaire). Data collection methods - analysis of scientific literature and sources (carried out in order to reveal the theoretical aspect of the attitude of academic youth to environmentally responsible behavior while traveling), document analysis, questionnaire survey and interview methods. The aim of the scientific literature analysis is to reveal the theoretical aspect of the attitude of academic youth to environmentally responsible behavior while traveling. The questionnaire survey was conducted in order to reveal the attitude of Lithuanian academic youth to environmentally responsible behavior while traveling. The questionnaire survey is used to survey Lithuanian academic youth and was carried out by placing the survey questionnaire on the Internet space www.apklausa.lt, distributing the questionnaire in higher education institutions. 209 respondents were surveyed.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Due to the influence of economic, social and political globalization processes, the tourism sector has become the leading economic sector in many countries around the world. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, tourism generates 9 percent of GDP, one in ten jobs and 6 percent of global exports worldwide through direct and indirect effects. However, tourism's impact on the environment can be both positive and negative. On a global scale, tourism has a serious negative impact on the environment: Flights to tourist destinations cause more CO₂ emissions than all local activities combined, with serious consequences for climate change. In its report on air traffic, the German Institute of Air Transport and Airport Research shows that global passenger traffic will increase by one third between 2009 and 2014, from 2.5 billion to almost 3.3 billion per year [14]. Aviation currently accounts for five percent of global CO₂ emissions. Without significant action, its contribution will rise to 22 percent by 2050, according to calculations recently published in a study for the European Parliament (Transforming Tourism: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2016) [16]. For these and similar reasons,

there is a growing focus on green consumption, including green travel behaviour.

Ecologically responsible consumption is a broad concept that many people associate with protecting the environment. However, we consume responsibly not only when we make conscious choices to reduce harmful effects on the environment and ourselves, e.g. not buying unnecessary things, sorting waste, etc. We also consume responsibly when we take into account the behaviour of the company producing the goods we buy, e.g. how the company produced the goods we buy, how the company produced the goods we buy, etc. We also consume ecologically responsibly when we take into account the behaviour of the company that produces the goods we buy, for example, how the company that produced the desired product behaves toward its employees, or when we choose an accommodation facility that is certified and pays attention to sustainability. Ecologically responsible consumption is the desire not only to reduce all areas of consumption, but also to consider each choice. Ecologically responsible consumption can also be defined as fair, green, sustainable, rational, ethical consumption. Fair consumption is related to the impact of consumption; green consumption is related to the desire to protect nature; sustainable consumption is related to the conservation of resources; rational consumption is related to the minimum amount of consumption; responsible consumption is related to the avoidance of harm and includes all the above categories" (Fontenelle) [1]. Smith also identifies conscious, ethical, green consumption (Smith) [9]. Although socially responsible and ethical consumption are not completely identical, they overlap to some extent (Francois-Lecompte, Roberts) [2]. Ecotourism is one of the most popular forms of sustainable tourism and a model of responsible consumption. For ecotourists, their habits and behaviour are mainly influenced by education, knowledge and awareness, love of nature and desire for new health benefits (Negacz) [6].

Eco-responsible and sustainable consumption by travellers is defined as "consumption that is environmentally friendly, that is, purchasing environmentally friendly products or services while traveling" (Lee & Lee) [5]. Nowadays, travellers are increasingly demanding environmentally friendly products (e.g., eco-friendly hotels, restaurants, cruise ships, airlines, destinations, resorts, and casinos) and expressing their desire to engage in responsible and sustainable consumption (Hall [3]; Ramkissoon, Graham Smith, & Weiler [7]; Wang, Wang, Wang, Yan, & Li [12]). Responsible and sustainable consumption by travellers toward products and services, purchasing and consuming them in an environmentally friendly manner is a necessary condition for promoting sustainable development (Han [4]; Ramkissoon, Weiler, & Smith [7]; Ramkissoon, Graham Smith, & Weiler [8]; Wang, Shen, Amy, Song, & Phau [11]).

Traveling youth seek to discover new cultures, are more interested in and interact with local cultures, are more responsible in their travel, and better understand the

principles of sustainability (D, Šaparnienė et al. [10]; United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2008, 2016 [17]). Thus, young people become a demographic indicator that contributes to the creation of "responsible tourism". Therefore, today it is increasingly relevant in the study of behavioural models, motivation, attitudes and sensitivity in behavioural models, attitudes and sensitivity studies and it acquires new scientific and practical importance (D. Šaparnienė et al.) [10].

Lithuania is also promoting youth involvement in sustainable tourism and looking for ways to involve and encourage young people. For example, the Lithuanian association "Active Youth" [13] aims to create opportunities for youth and promote positive and sustainable changes in society's relationship with ecology, health, vulnerable groups and the Internet. Its vision is to become a leading organization in creating a socially integrated and harmonious world. This association provides opportunities for young people to travel more actively and contribute to the development of sustainable tourism (Active Youth, 2021) [13]. In order to promote sustainable tourism, the association provides young people with recommendations both before and during the trip. It is recommended to choose bus or train, take less luggage, choose longer trips with fewer flights, do not print a ticket, travel with greener airlines, choose direct flights and make sure to turn off electrical appliances at home before leaving. When traveling, it is recommended to use reusable or larger water bottles, avoid plastic bags, avoid buying take-out coffee and instead drink it on site, rent a bicycle or use public transportation, rent a hybrid or electric car, use hotel towels and bedding for more than one day, and turn off lights and electrical appliances when leaving the room (Active Youth, 2021) [13].

In conclusion, young people are an important driving force in the development of sustainable tourism. They can make a maximum contribution to increasing the positive impacts of tourism and reducing its negative impacts. Youth is a valuable target group in the tourism industry, therefore, models are being developed around the world to involve youth in solving tourism problems, organizing seminars, discussions and sharing experiences among community members. Lithuania also seeks to promote youth involvement in sustainable tourism by spreading ideas and finding various ways for youth to get involved.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research objective: To conduct a research analysis of the attitudes of Lithuanian academic youth towards environmentally responsible behavior when traveling.

Research sample. Respondents of the survey - Lithuanian academic youth. The survey was conducted in January-February 2025. A total of 209 respondents were interviewed. The age group of young people selected for the study was from 18 to 35 years. According to the Law on the Fundamentals of Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania, "a young person is a person between the ages of 14 and 29 (inclusive)"; however, due to changes in

public life, it is already planned to increase the age to 35. Therefore, the authors chose this age limit for the survey. According to the data of the Statistical Office of Lithuania, in the academic year 2022-2023, 102.4 thousand students studied in higher education institutions of the country, 71.5 thousand of them in universities and 30.9 thousand in colleges. The research sample can be calculated according to the Paniotto formula: $n=1/(\Delta^2+1/N)$, where: n - sample size; Δ - permissible error; N - population size. The research sample was calculated using the Paniotto formula. According to the Paniotto formula, a sufficient size to ensure the representativeness of the research sample is $n = 204$.

Therefore, according to the Paniotto formula, the sufficient size to ensure the representativeness of the research sample is $n = 204$. Responses were received from 209 individuals - young academics aged 18-35 and over - so the survey can be said to be representative. All respondents answered the same set of questions. They were also given multiple-choice answers from which they could choose an acceptable answer or write their comments and suggestions.

Research Methodology and Instrument. The quantitative method chosen for the study was a questionnaire survey. A questionnaire consisting of 23 questions was prepared. The introductory part of the questionnaire presented the purpose of the study, indicated the purpose for which the collected data would be used, and ensured anonymity. When compiling the questionnaire, the following groups / blocks of questions were used: a block of questions related to the principles and choice of environmentally friendly travel, another block related to the respondents' attitudes towards environmentally friendly behavior while traveling, when choosing accommodation and transport services, another block of questions related to the respondents' attitudes towards the possibilities of environmentally friendly travel in Lithuania, and a block of demographic questions. The results of the questionnaires of the participants of the quantitative study were processed and analyzed using the Excel software package.

Research ethics. When distributing the questionnaires, ethical principles (privacy, confidentiality, voluntary decision making, etc.) were observed. Each respondent was free to decide whether or not to participate in the study. The data will be used for summary purposes, while maintaining the anonymity of the respondents.

Demographic and social characteristics of the respondents. 209 respondents participated in the survey, of whom 87% were women and 17% were men. 73% of respondents study at a non-university institution and 27% at a university institution. 83% of respondents are part-time students and 38 percent are full-time students. 85% of respondents are studying and working, and 15% are studying only. 27% of respondents are in the 18-25 age group, 25% of respondents are in the 26-30 age group,

23% of respondents are in the 31-35 age group, and the remaining 25% of respondents are in the 30+ age group.

The vast majority of respondents (97%) like to travel, only 3% of respondents do not like to travel. More than half of the respondents (52%) travel several times a year, three out of ten respondents (32%) travel once a year, 7% of the respondents travel once a month, 2% of the respondents travel once a week, 3% of the respondents do not travel at all, 5% of the respondents chose the answer "other" (travel once every few years; travel when opportunities allow, etc.). The majority of respondents (65%) travel in Lithuania and abroad, two out of ten respondents (23%) travel in Lithuania, 9% of respondents travel abroad, and 3% of respondents chose "other" (travel from abroad to Lithuania, all of the above, etc.).

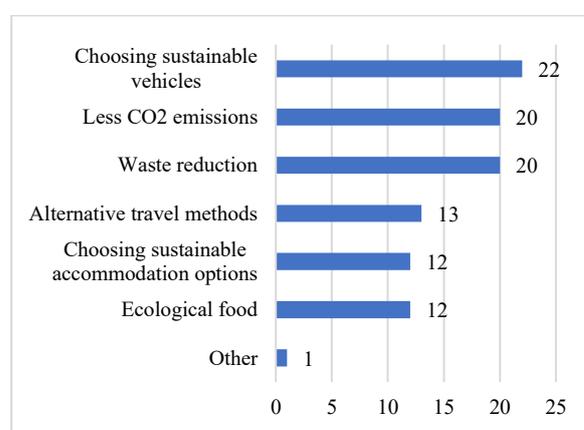


Fig. 1. Results of respondents' awareness of the principles of environmentally responsible travel, % (compiled by the authors based on the results of the study).

Figure 1 shows the respondents' awareness of the principles of environmentally responsible travel. 22% of respondents have heard about the principles of choosing sustainable vehicles, 20% of respondents respectively have heard about reducing CO2 emissions and waste, 13% of respondents have heard about alternative travel methods, 12% of respondents respectively have heard about choosing sustainable accommodation and ecological food. It can be concluded that academic youth are quite sufficiently informed about the principles of environmentally responsible travel.

Respondents use the following modes of transportation when traveling 32% of respondents choose to travel by car, 24% by plane, 14% by foot, 13% by public transport, 10% by bicycle, 7% by train. It can be concluded that slightly more than a third of respondents choose environmentally friendly means of transport (public transport, walking, cycling). Respondents choose the same means of transportation each time they travel, depending on the situation or destination (4%), usually use the same means of transportation, but sometimes change (18%). 14% of respondents choose the most comfortable means of transportation, 13% choose the cheapest means of transportation, choose a means of

transportation taking into account the weather and other factors (11%), and only 2% of respondents choose the most environmentally friendly means of transportation. It can be concluded that the attitude of respondents in choosing a vehicle is not yet environmentally responsible. Most respondents (67%) said that they choose sustainable vehicles when traveling for the following reasons: because of climate change, want to reduce air pollution, care about nature conservation, less environmental pollution, savings, etc.) 18% of respondents said that they do not choose sustainable vehicles for the following reasons: they think more about convenience than about sustainability, they choose what is most convenient, they use their own vehicle, there is not always an opportunity to choose an environmentally friendly vehicle, etc.).

TABLE 1. RESPONDENTS' BEHAVIOR AFTER STAYING AT AN ACCOMMODATION FACILITY, %

Statement	Always	Never	Sometimes
I choose an accommodation that is environmentally and sustainably friendly	8.3	20	71.7
I save electricity in accommodation facilities	50	23.3	26.7
I save water in accommodation enterprise	48.3	21.7	30
I use the towel more than once	70	5	25
I refuse the offer to clean the room every day	45	13.3	41.7
I refuse the offer to clean my room every day. I turn off the heating or cooling of the room when there is no need	66.7	8.3	25
If the accommodation provides catering services, I choose dishes made from local products	25	11.7	63.3
I put in as much food as I can eat	75	5	20

(Source: compiled by the authors based on the results of the study)

Table 1 shows the results of the survey of respondents on environmentally responsible behavior when staying in an accommodation facility (see Table 1). Summarizing the information presented in Table 1, it can be said that most respondents try to be responsible consumers during their stays in accommodation establishments. Most respondents save electricity (50%) and water (48.3%), use a towel more than once (70%). When not needed, they turn off the heating or cooling of the room (66.7%), put as much food in the room as they will eat (75%) and refuse the offer to clean the room every day (45%). The opinion of the respondents regarding the choice of an accommodation establishment for which ecology and sustainability are very important differs the most from the other choices, because the majority of the respondents (71.7%) stated that they only sometimes choose an accommodation establishment for which ecology and

sustainability are important, and only sometimes choose dishes made of local products (63.3%), if the accommodation establishment offers catering services. In summary, such behavior of the respondents can be considered as only partially environmentally responsible.

When asked to rate their environmental awareness while traveling, respondents gave the following answers: 57% of respondents rated their environmental awareness as average, 25% reported high awareness, 15% reported low awareness, and only 3% of respondents rated their environmental awareness as very high.

Sustainability in travel is an important issue for many respondents. According to the survey results, 47% of respondents said that sustainability is an important consideration for them when traveling. This shows that more and more people are becoming aware and trying to reduce their negative impact on the environment. On the other hand, 28% of respondents chose a different answer option and interpreted sustainability in travel differently. Some respondents pointed out that while sustainability is an important issue, people often just want to relax and focus on rest and travel experiences when they travel. Others felt that excessive consumption should be reduced or expressed concern about the ever-increasing amount of waste. Meanwhile, 15% of respondents said sustainability is important to them, and 7% said sustainability is very important. Finally, 3% of respondents are not at all interested in sustainability issues in travel. This data shows that there is a growing awareness of sustainability in travel, but there are still some people who are not aware of its importance or who are simply not interested in the issue. This indicates that education and dissemination of information about the importance of sustainability can be very important in promoting more responsible travel behavior.

When asked whether young people are becoming more aware of the environmental impact of their travel, the survey shows that opinions on this issue vary widely. 42% of respondents did not respond positively to the question of whether they often think about the environmental impact of their travel, which could mean that these people do not think about environmental issues or do not believe that their travel has a significant impact. On the other hand, 30% of respondents say they do not know if they think about this issue, which may indicate that they lack information or are unsure of their opinion. Finally, 28% of respondents admit that they often think about the environmental aspects of their travel, indicating a growing awareness and responsibility. Based on the data provided (see Figure 2) on travelers' behaviors and choices, several conclusions can be drawn about the environmental actions they take when traveling. 10% of respondents always choose environmentally friendly modes of transportation. Although this percentage seems small, 72% of respondents sometimes use these methods, which show a certain awareness and desire to contribute

to environmental protection. 18% of respondents never choose green transportation. 40% of respondents always try to avoid plastic, but 15% never do, and 45% of respondents sometimes choose to reduce plastic use, which shows that most people tend to be responsible, but not everyone always follows these principles.

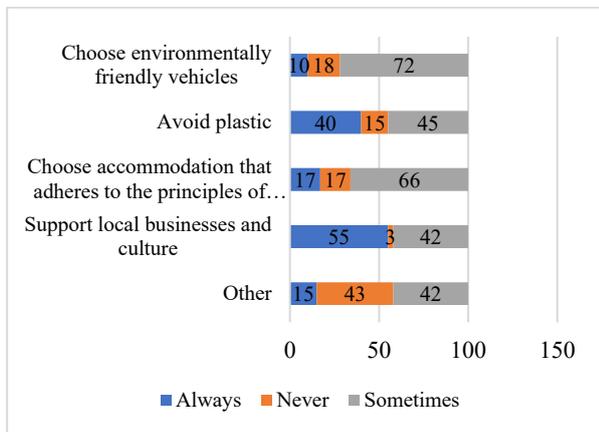


Fig. 2. Actions taken by respondents while traveling, % (compiled by the authors based on the results of the study).

Respondents' attitudes toward sustainable accommodation are quite varied. Only 17% always choose accommodations that follow sustainability principles, 66% sometimes consider these aspects, and the same 17 percent never consider sustainability principles. This shows that sustainability issues are not yet a priority for all travelers. 55% show a strong desire to support local businesses and culture, while only 3% never do, 42% sometimes do, indicating that most travelers value local culture and economy.

When asked what motivates respondents to choose environmentally responsible travel, the responses show that respondents are motivated by a variety of factors. Financial considerations were cited by 32% of respondents, and personal health and environmental principles were cited by 31% of respondents. However, some respondents indicate that environmentally friendly solutions are not sufficiently accessible or affordable, which is why they do not choose sustainability. 5% of respondents say that if green solutions were cheaper, it would motivate them to travel more sustainably. To date, these decisions are often driven by a lack of choice in green options, so many continue to choose traditional travel methods.

As the respondents' answers show, the importance of environmentally responsible travel behavior is particularly important in both academic and everyday life. Of the 209 respondents, 82% have a positive view of this behavior, while 18% have no clear opinion. The positive attitudes toward environmentally responsible travel demonstrate a growing awareness and responsibility for protecting the environment. Environmentally responsible travel among academic youth is an important and relevant issue that requires a comprehensive approach and the active

participation of various organizations and institutions. Respondents emphasized that educational institutions and youth organizations should take the initiative to promote such activities. It is important to motivate students to actively participate in Erasmus+ exchanges, which are not only an opportunity to get to know other cultures, but also to get to know sustainability trends and to see good and bad examples. Education, starting from kindergarten, is an essential aspect that allows young people to grow up as conscious and responsible citizens. In conclusion, promoting environmentally responsible travel among academic youth requires a joint effort from educational institutions, youth organizations, and students themselves. Only by working together and investing in education and information dissemination can we create a sustainable and responsible approach to travel.

Based on the results of the survey, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents do not have a clear opinion about the possibilities of environmentally friendly travel in Lithuania. 52% of respondents answered that they do not have an opinion, and 25% of respondents evaluate these opportunities positively. Meanwhile, only 5% of respondents said that they were not satisfied with the existing opportunities. These data show that while some college youth are satisfied with the options available for environmentally responsible travel, the majority of young people are still undecided or uninformed about these options. This may be a sign that there is potential to improve and develop the infrastructure and offer of environmentally friendly travel in Lithuania, aiming at greater public involvement and awareness on this issue.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

1. Young people are an important driving force in the development of sustainable tourism. They can make a significant contribution to increasing the positive impacts of tourism and reducing its negative impacts. Young people are a valuable target group in the tourism industry, which is why models are being developed around the world to involve young people in solving tourism problems by organizing seminars, discussions and sharing experiences among community members. Lithuania is also trying to promote youth involvement in sustainable tourism by disseminating ideas and finding different ways for youth to get involved.

2. All respondents have heard more or less about the principles of environmentally responsible travel. Most respondents, depending on the situation or the purpose of the trip, try to choose environmentally friendly and sustainable means of transport, and apply various sustainable actions when traveling: avoid plastic, try to support local businesses and culture, etc. When staying in accommodation facilities, respondents also try to behave responsibly and sustainably: save water and electricity, use room heating and cooling services sustainably, etc. Most respondents positively evaluate environmentally responsible behavior when traveling, but even half of the

respondents are not ready to pay more for a sustainable trip. In summary, young people's attitudes towards travel and its impact on environmental responsibility are dynamic and constantly changing. These trends show that young people are ready to seek sustainable solutions and take responsibility for their actions to protect the planet for future generations.

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