

URBAN PARKS AS ADOLESCENTS' FAVOURITE PLACES? ANALYSIS OF PREFERENCES WITH RESPECT TO ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR

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Research on adolescents' favourite places has received limited attention and only a small number of studies have focused on the preference for greenery among all urban areas, or considered a nature orientation of individuals in this regard. The aim of this paper is to present an analysis of adolescents' 'favourite place' selection in relation to their environmentally responsible behaviour (ERB), gender, and residential location. A total of 272 participants (13 – 16 years of age) completed mapping activities, during which data on favourite places, as well as ERBs were collected. The research was located in the oldest ward of Banská Bystrica (central Slovakia). The measurement of ERB was based on Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour. The results showed that ERB has no effect on the choice of parks as favourite places in the town. It means that individuals with higher ERB scores mark parks as their favourite places to a similar extent compared to other urban areas. Yet, the parks themselves were more popular among adolescents with a higher ERB score. Residents of the studied ward had a greater preference for parks than other public space users. The same was observed for girls compared to boys. A closer look at adolescents' behavioural aspects of favourite place selection and motives for labelling green sites requires more in-depth future research.

Key words: theory of planned behaviour, teenagers, gender, urban greenery, pro-environmental behaviour, city of Banská Bystrica

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that the natural environment improves the overall mental health of individuals (Mantler and Logan 2015 and Wood et al. 2017). Moreover, greenery in a local neighbourhood is an important predictor of positive mood states as well as contributing to stress reduction (Pazhouhanfar 2018). Research to date has shown that this is also true for children and youths; accessible green spaces have a positive impact on their mental health as well as on their health in general (Flouri et al. 2014 and McCormick 2017). In relation to this, it is important to know where young people prefer to spend their free time. Yet, there has been limited attention to research on the favourite places of teenagers (e. g., Abbott-Chapman and Robertson 2001, Abbott-Chapman and Robertson 2009, Mason and Mennis 2018 and Kim and Lee 2019). However, existing studies have not primarily focused on the preference for greenery and nature areas. Moreover, there is also a lack of papers dealing with the preference of urban parks in relation to environmentally responsible behaviour (ERB). ERB can be defined as the behaviour of an