

# Knowledge Relevant for the Implementation of Sustainable Tourism Development: Attitudes of Local Inhabitants and Students

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to explore the attitudes and level of knowledge towards sustainable tourism development among the locals and the students. The research was conducted in Primorsko-Goranska County in Croatia. The results between the two groups were compared in order to get a clearer picture on possible similarities or differences in attitudes and knowledge levels because both of them are very important stakeholders for sustainable tourism development and need to be involved in this process. The methodology used in the paper consists of two levels of analysis. The theoretical part is based on secondary sources in the field of sustainable tourism development while the research one is presented through results from quantitative research through a questionnaire among local inhabitants and students of tourism in the Primorsko-Goranska County. A survey was distributed online, with questions related to sustainable development in tourism, its relevant elements and the knowledge connected to it. The data was then collected and analysed using independent-samples t-test, correlation analysis and other methods relevant for this research. The stakeholders assessed elements and perception of knowledge related to sustainable development in tourism. The paper emphasizes potential differences in the level of knowledge and attitude between the students and the local population. The attitudes of the stakeholders towards the topic are mostly positive, but they also underline the need for further education in the field of sustainable development, both in theoretical terms and in terms of acquiring skills and habits needed to thrive in the era of sustainability. The contribution of the paper is in identifying the necessary knowledge for the implementation of sustainable development of tourism among the local population and students of tourism. In addition, the self-evaluation of the current level of knowledge was examined. This should be the basis for the further development of educational programs and other programs for the whole local population in the field of sustainable tourism development.

**Keywords:** Sustainable tourism development, Locals' attitudes, Student attitudes, Knowledge evaluation, Education

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## 1. Introduction

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> century, tourism has steadily grown and has become one of the leading industries in the world. Nowadays many countries and regions throughout the world depends largely on tourism for their development, mainly because it is considered an industry which can reap large benefits with minimum investment (Choi, Sirakaya, 2005). With the world economy slowly shifting towards a more sustainable model of development, mainly due to the dangers caused by climate change, tourism also has to adapt to the new, sustainable world humanity is trying to build. As pointed out by Jovanović et al (2021), the stakeholders in tourism have become increasingly aware of the need for sustainability, which can only be achieved with the cooperation with the local population of the destinations.

What is fundamental for sustainable development in tourism are the attitudes of the local population, since it is with their support that tourism can develop in an area. The local inhabitants are also the ones who are being directly impacted by tourism, making them important stakeholders in the industry (Jovanović et al, 2021). The local population's perception of sustainable development is determined by its perceived benefits, together with quality of life. It is therefore crucial to understand the local communities' attitude towards sustainability in order to properly promote it and its benefits to the locals. That is why Cheng et al (2017) claim that sustainable development has become a key topic of analysis in recent study of tourism.

This paper explores the perception and knowledgeability of members of the local community and of students of tourism in the Primorsko-Goranska County in Croatia towards sustainable development and their attitude towards the economic, socio-cultural and environmental effects of sustainable tourism. The theory uses secondary sources on sustainable development in tourism and the research part is based on a survey conducted first amongst students of the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija and then within the locals in that area. The goal is to analyse and compare the attitudes and knowledge about sustainable development between those two groups. Primorsko-Goranska County was chosen as a research area because it is one of the most developed tourism counties in Croatia, where 17.67% of tourist traffic is realized (Državni zavod za statistiku, 2022). Moreover, the development of tourism in Primorsko-Goranska County is based on the concept of sustainable development, which makes it suitable for the study of this topic.

## **2. Literature Review**

In order to analyse the attitudes of the local community and students towards sustainable development, a review of the literature on that topic is needed. As pointed out by Jovanović et al (2021), sustainable development can be seen as a dynamic process which changes in connection to the wider development of the society to fit each generation's needs, as well as those of the environment. It has become the focus of tourism development in many countries in recent years, with an emphasis on economic development, environmental preservation, and serving the local community. As Klarić and Marković (2015) describe, tourism has historically had a mixed socio-economic effect on local communities. While it does tend to bring economic development, it can also weaken the local identity and take away spaces from the locals to use for tourism activities. Due to those negative effects, as well as the heavy strain tourism puts on the natural environment of a destination, plans for sustainable development are needed to further develop the industry in the future, with a focus on the local communities and the preservation of the environment in a destination. Choi and Sirakaya (2005) claim that sustainable tourism is a product of the desire for a better future and of fears that conventional tourism has become unsustainable in the long-term. Arion et al (2016) describe the development of the idea of sustainability in the past several decades as an interplay between three key factors of tourism development: environmental interests, socio-cultural needs of the local population, and the economic development of the area. In order to make plans for sustainable development which could satisfy all three of those factors, a lot of research has been done on the topic of the local community's perception of tourism and its impact on the community and the local area, since tourism cannot develop without the support of the locals. A key factor in creating a positive view of tourism in local communities is the positive economic effect that tourism tends to have, since it provides jobs and brings investors into the area.

Sustainable tourism needs to juggle between satisfying the needs of both the local community and of the environment. As Klarić and Marković (2015) point out, the development of tourism almost by default changes the state of the environment, meaning that the two are in a state of constant feedback; an increase in tourism activity almost inevitably leads to a decrease in the quality of the environment. However, an increase in tourism activity also increases the economic welfare of the local population, which means that an equilibrium between economic wellbeing, socio-cultural identity, and natural environment needs to be achieved for sustainable development to be plausible. As Chen et al (2019) explain, sustainable tourism puts its focus on the local inhabitants of the destination. Cheng et al (2017) further explain that point by defining the local community as not only the people who live in a geographical location, but also as the emotional, psychological, and interpersonal interactions between the local inhabitants. Since the local inhabitants are the ones living in a destination full-time, it is in their best interest for tourism to achieve both economic growth and be environmentally sustainable, and it is in the interest of all stakeholders in a destination that the local community has a positive view of sustainable tourism development. One of the main goals of sustainability is to make communities less vulnerable and to promote the preservation of social and cultural systems, as well as the environment, which makes it a desirable way of tourism development (Klarić, Marković, 2015).

One of the ways sustainability can be achieved is through better communication with the local population and through the participation of the community in decision-making processes. As pointed out by Cheng et al (2017), if the local community is involved in the decision-making, its members will also feel stronger responsibility and pay more attention to matters of the environment and sustainability and tend to organize themselves to further their own interests and the interests of the destination, making them a potential mediator between economic development and environmental preservation. It is also necessary to educate the locals on the topics of sustainability, since a high level of knowledge leads to better understanding of the issues a destination faces in its quest to become sustainable. Another positive effect sustainability has on the local community is that it aims at sharing the wealth generated by tourism in an equal fashion, with Choi and Sirakaya (2005) pointing at government support in the form of training programs, low-interest loans, and fostering the cooperation between locals and other stakeholders in the destination as examples of how that can be achieved. The economic element is crucial towards developing a positive attitude towards sustainability among the local community, as Kitnuntavivat and Tang (2008) point out, since locals are prone to support development which they see as economically beneficial to them. Aside from the economic factor, other factors which influence the attitude of the locals towards tourism are environmental sensitivity and socio-cultural appropriation. In the long term, sustainable development aims at achieving economic growth while preserving the natural environment and the socio-cultural specifics and traditions of an area. In order to further analyse the topic, the following chapter presents a look into the attitudes of local communities towards tourism development.

### **3. Local Community and Tourism Development**

Since the local community and the local inhabitants are major actors in the development of tourism in an area, their needs and desires are crucial to tourism planning. As Jovanović et al (2021) describe it, if the local inhabitants are removed from the planning and decision-making, they become marginalized and their attitude towards tourism turns negative. Sustainable tourism therefore aims at improving the quality of life of the local inhabitants, which in turn tends to increase the quality of the experience for the visitors and maintain a certain standard of environment preservation. Since the local inhabitants are a key stakeholders in tourism destination, improving their attitude and involving them in the decision-making processes inspires them to also provide a higher quality of service to visitors. The attitudes of the local community can change, as Klarić and Marković (2015) explain, since a satisfied local population tends to provide better service, which in turn can increase the number of visitors, which, if not managed in a sustainable way, can lead to overdevelopment and negatively impact the attitudes of the local inhabitants towards tourism. That is why it is crucial to monitor the local inhabitants' needs and attitudes.

The management of a destination's resources is an important factor in improving the attitude of local inhabitants, as Cheng et al (2017) point out, since the transfer of resource management responsibility so that the community can take part in it greatly contributes to sustainable development. To help the local inhabitants get involved in such processes, their knowledge and attitudes about sustainability need to be investigated. Cheng et al (2017) define sustainable development attitudes as opinions which are created by certain intrinsic factors which motivate people towards environmental responsibility. Local inhabitants who have strong positive attitudes towards sustainability develop personal habits and collective behaviour which are in line with the ideals of sustainability and which help them promote a sustainable lifestyle. Such local inhabitants need to be encouraged to participate in the public affairs of a destination so as to help achieve sustainable development on a broader level. Chen et al (2019) share a similar idea, claiming that the locals' attitudes towards sustainable tourism include a mixture of opinions, beliefs, and emotions towards tourism. All those opinions and feelings influence the actions of the local inhabitants, which can benefit or negatively impact a destination. Musa and Zamani-Farahani (2008) add that the local inhabitants' attitude towards tourism is often subject to different conditions and tends to be more positive if the local inhabitants feel they can influence all outcomes of tourism development. Should the leaders of tourism in an area not include the local inhabitants in the decision-making process, then Choi and Sirakaya (2005) claim the local inhabitants become resentful of the tourism industry and of visitors, which negatively influences the development of tourism.

Another reason why the local population ought to be included into the process of tourism planning and development is, as explained by Golub and Janković (2019), that the local culture and lifestyle are one of the key elements that attract tourists to an area. Local inhabitants are also usually the owners of the land on which tourism is developed, so their inclusion is in many cases not only necessary, but also unavoidable. That also means that the local inhabitants are active participants in the everyday life of a destination; they are the ones who create the local atmosphere and lifestyle which is one of the most attractive products offered to visitors. The local culture, way of life, and traditions are the main attraction in many destinations, and they can only be sustained with the active participation of the local inhabitants who create and nurture that. As Choi and Sirakaya (2005) explain, tourists like to become familiar with the culture, society, and natural environment of a destination before deciding to visit, meaning that a rich socio-cultural life and a sustainable lifestyle of the local inhabitants can greatly improve the image of a destination. Glub and Janković (2019) therefore conclude that local inhabitants are one of the most important stakeholders in the tourism industry and that it is essential that they have a positive attitude and active participation in the development of sustainable tourism.

Due to all the mentioned reasons, numerous recent studies have focused on the attitudes and participation of the local community and its local inhabitants in sustainable tourism development. As Akinci and Öksüz (2022) define it in their study on the topic, the goal of such studies is to determine how important the perceived performance of local inhabitants is in the development of sustainable tourism and how the local inhabitants evaluate the principles of sustainability. While the main focus for a long time was mass tourism, in recent years it has started to shift towards sustainability and local communities have also been affected by that shift. It is central to determine the thoughts of the local inhabitants towards that shift through the way they perceive the ideals of sustainability, how much they know about them, and whether they are satisfied with them and with their results. As pointed out by Akinci and Öksüz (2022), such a study will help understand the way the local community is thinking about sustainable tourism, which in turn can help determine how ready the local inhabitants are to become active participants in the planning and development of sustainable tourism.

#### **4. Methodology and Findings**

This survey was conducted with the goal of determining the knowledge and attitudes of students of tourism and of the local inhabitants of Primorsko-Goranska County in Croatia on the topic of sustainable development in tourism and to deduce the differences in knowledge and attitude between the two groups. The survey was conducted because, as described by Institut za turizam (2019), the local inhabitants' satisfaction with the development of tourism is one of the indicators of the level of sustainability of tourism, which is defined by the European Tourism Indicator System for Sustainable Destination Management (ETIS) and the organization of observatories that deal with sustainable tourism of the World Tourism Organization, the UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (UNWTO INSTO).

The findings of this survey are relevant on several levels. The attitudes of local inhabitants and whether they support tourism development in the destination or not helps determine the level of sustainable development achieved in that area, since one of the key elements of sustainability is the care for the local inhabitants. It also shows how effective the management of a destination is in involving the local community in the development of sustainable tourism. In addition to that, the survey highlights the importance of the cooperation of local communities in the development of tourism and in attracting visitors.

The central goal of surveying the attitudes of local inhabitants towards tourism development is to help with the planning of development strategies based on sustainability, which need to take into account the local inhabitants' attitude towards tourism and tourists. More specifically, the goal of this research was to determine the opinions of the local inhabitants and students on the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental effects of tourism in the Primorsko-Goranska County and their reactions to tourism and to tourists themselves. Its contribution is in showing how the local inhabitants perceive sustainable tourism development, what level of knowledge they have on the topic, and whether they see sustainable development as an improvement on different, unsustainable methods of development. Since it is not possible to implement the principles of sustainability in tourism without cooperation with the local community, this survey also shows how the local inhabitants see themselves and how they perceive their role within the framework of sustainable tourism development.

Local inhabitants are the main stakeholders of sustainable development. Primary research of the attitudes of the local inhabitants was conducted in the form of a questionnaire distributed online in January 2023 with questions aimed at determining the attitudes and knowledge of the respondents towards sustainable tourism development. A total of 127 questionnaires were collected from local inhabitants all over the Primorsko-Goranska County. The first part of the questionnaire determines the respondents' gender and uses questions to deduce how they understand the notion of sustainable development (Posavec, 2016). The second part includes statements which refer to several different constructs: knowledge about sustainable development (Berglund et al, 2018), attitudes towards sustainable development (Berglund et al, 2018), role and daily habits (Ćulum, et al, 2008), sustainable behaviour (Berglund et al, 2018), attitudes towards responsibility for sustainable development (Ćulum et al, 2008), the impact of tourism on the sustainability of the destination (Klarić, Marković, 2015), support for tourism development (Arion, 2016), and finally support for sustainable tourism development (Chen, Chieh Yang, Hsu, 2019)

The knowledge and attitudes towards sustainable development are determined with the use of the environmental, social, and economic factors. Environmental factors include environmental preservation and protection, waste reduction, use of natural resources, and use of renewable energy sources. The social factors considered are life expectancy and quality of life, gender equality, respect for human rights, and the quality and inclusivity of education. The economic factors include air, soil, and water pollution, poverty reduction, the stability and functioning of the local economy, payment for environmental damage, and equality of opportunity. The elements included into statements about role and daily habits are concerns for the issues of people with special needs, poor people and other marginalized groups, concern about the effects of climate change, raising the living standard, rational consumption of water and electricity, the use of different modes of transport to reduce pollution and similar topics. The construct of sustainable behaviour includes statements about sustainable forms of transport, collecting and sorting of garbage, changing lifestyles, supporting humanitarian and environmental organizations, smart shopping, and keeping oneself informed about the daily news.

The attitudes towards responsibility for sustainable development cover statements about development decisions, global warming, recycling, the quality of production and its profits, and the responsibility of promoting and implementing education for sustainable development. The impact of tourism on the sustainability of the destination includes statements about the increase in cost of living, the reduction of the quality of life,

overcrowding, the increase in cultural and entertainment activities. The following construct, support for tourism development, is concerned with the development of long-term plans in tourism and the reduction of the negative effects it has on the natural environment. The final construct is support for sustainable tourism development, and it includes supporting or not supporting activities like community tourism initiatives, cultural exchange between local inhabitants and tourists, and activities which aim to reduce the negative effects of tourism.

The respondents were asked to express their level of agreement with the different statements using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 with the following pattern: 1 - do not agree at all, 2 - do not agree, 3 - neither agree nor disagree, 4 - agree, 5 - fully agree. They were also asked to show how important they considered the different statements on a similar five-level scale with the pattern being: 1 - totally important, 2 - not important, 3 - neither important nor unimportant, 4 - important, 5 - totally important.

The data was processed using the statistical program for social sciences IBM SPSS Statistics 23, and descriptive statistics were used for data processing and interpretation. What follows are the results of the research obtained through the application of descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test and correlation analysis. The descriptive statistics showed that from a total of 127 respondents, 27.3% were male and 71.9% female.

Before the data processing, it is necessary to determine the reliability of the constructs included in the analysis.

According to Hair (2007), for a construct to be reliable, the Cronbach’s alpha must be higher than 0.7. As Table 1 shows, all three knowledge constructs (environmental, social, economic) have sufficient value and are therefore reliable for further testing using other methods.

**Table 1: Reliability Analysis of Sustainable Development Knowledge Constructs**

The name of the construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Knowledge of the environmental aspect	0,769
Knowledge of the social aspect	0,889
Knowledge of the economic aspect	0,862

Next, the T-test for independent samples was used to test the assumed significant statistical difference between two arithmetic means of independent samples. The research questions was: Is there a statistically significant difference in sustainable development knowledge related to gender?

**Table 2: Independent-Samples t-test for Knowledge and Gender t-test for Equality of Means**

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
<b>Environment</b>	-2,190	43,790	,034	-,31335	,14309	-,60178	-,02493
<b>Society</b>	-2,442	125	,016	-,37804	,15483	-,68447	-,07161
<b>Economy</b>	-2,637	125	,009	-,38152	,14471	-,66791	-,09513

As this table shows, the only significant difference in knowledge about the environment, social and economic factors is the one in the economic factor, which shows a  $p < 0.05$  value.

**Table 3: Independent-Samples t-test for the Support for the Sustainable Development of Tourism and Gender t-test for Equality of Means**

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
<b>Support for the sustainable development of tourism</b>	-1,028	125	,306	-,13556	,13185	-,39651	,12539

Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is no statistically significant difference in support for the sustainable development of tourism in relation to gender, which means that there are no gender differences in relation to the points of view of men and women.

**Table 4:** Independent-samples t-test for the role and daily habits of the population and gender t-test for equality of means

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Interval Difference		Confidence of the
						Lower	Upper	
<b>Role and daily habits of the population</b>	2,704	125	,008	,38171	,14115	,10236	,66107	

As this table shows, there is a statistical significance, since the p-value is below 0.05 (p=0.08).

**Table 5: The Relationship Between Knowledge About Sustainable Development and the Role and Daily Habits of the Population**

		<b>Role and daily habits</b>	
<b>Spearman's rho</b>	Knowledge	r <sub>s</sub>	-,430
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
		N	127

This table shows a statistically significant relationship between knowledge and role and daily habits (p < 0.01, r<sub>s</sub>=-0.430).

Knowledge about sustainable development was examined using the construct of the same name. A descriptive analysis and a more detailed explanation of this construct were added, considering the environmental, social and economic aspect. According to the obtained data, the knowledge of environmental aspects has the highest score (M=4.27, SD=0.60). Locals attribute the highest importance to education about sustainable development (M=4.51), and the lowest the statement that the preservation of the diversity of living beings is necessary for sustainable development (M=3.99).

**Table 6: The Relationship Between Knowledge About Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Behaviour**

		<b>Sustainable behaviour</b>	
<b>Spearman's rho</b>	Knowledge	r <sub>s</sub>	,498
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
		N	127

When determining the degree of agreement with certain statements within the constructs "knowledge about sustainable development" and "sustainable behaviour", the correlation analysis showed that knowledge of local inhabitants about sustainable development and their sustainable behaviour are strongly related (r<sub>s</sub>=0.498, p<0.01).

**Table 7: The Relationship Between the Attitudes Towards Sustainable Development and the Role and Daily Habits of the Population**

		<b>Role and daily habits</b>	
<b>Spearman's rho</b>	Attitudes	r <sub>s</sub>	,498
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
		N	127

A similar situation is found in the table above, which shows a comparison of the constructs "attitudes towards sustainable development" and "the role and daily habits of the population". Since the value of the Spearman coefficient ( $r_s$ ) is lower than 0.01, there is a statistically significant difference ( $r_s=0.498$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

The results of this research can contribute to determining the knowledge and the attitudes of the local inhabitants towards different elements of sustainable development in tourism, as well as show the difference in knowledge and attitude between them and students of tourism. Given the importance of local inhabitants in sustainable tourism planning, this research can be used by tourism planners and educators to decide steps to further educate local inhabitants and improve their attitude towards sustainable tourism development.

## **5. Education and Knowledge for Sustainable Development in Tourism**

One of the things pointed at in the research is the importance of knowledge and its impact on the attitudes towards sustainable development. Knowledge on the issues of sustainability can only be gained through education. As Witong (2022) points out, common educational practices have failed to meet the standards required in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and a shift has occurred towards lifelong learning, with the demand for all types of education, from school-age education to adult education, skyrocketing in recent years. With the rapid social, economic, technological, and political changes happening in the world, the norms and lifestyles are perpetually being redefined, meaning that constant lifelong education is essential to stay up to date in today's world. The development of digital technologies has also transformed the way people learn, with more and more people learning digitally, which increases the demand for states to invest into digital infrastructure. Witong (2022) also adds that education is becoming more available to disadvantaged groups like women and girls, who have in recent decades increasingly become part of the educated workforce. All of those changes also influence the way people view sustainable development, since a high level of knowledge within the population is a central factor for achieving sustainability in the population's lifestyle and everyday life. Today's world has become more complex, more globalized and interconnected, and more unpredictable than ever before, and it needs to be oriented towards sustainable development in order to leave a better world for the future generations.

Knowledge and education are therefore central to achieving the goals of sustainability. Education can promote sustainability in several ways, as pointed out by López Ospina (2000): it can educate people on the values and ethics of sustainability, encourage interdisciplinarity and the contextualization of everyday topics, promote lifelong learning and constant self-development and self-betterment, highlight the importance of local communities and their relationship with the natural environment, and help people maximize their potential so they can live a fulfilled life while also working towards a viable and sustainable future. Education also plays an important role in fighting poverty and nurturing the ideals of democratic government, seen as central elements of sustainable development. Lutz (2016) points to a global survey conducted by the UN which shows that good education was ranked by the respondents as the top issue which would improve their quality of life, even more so than job opportunities or good healthcare. That is especially important for traditionally disadvantaged groups like women, since more educated women are members of the active workforce and increase the human capital of the labour market. At the same time, more educated women tend to have less children, which changes the population forecast and can prevent overpopulation in the less developed parts of the world (Lutz, 2016). It also increases household income and gives people better access to relevant information, which all contributes to the socio-economic development of a country.

One key example of the shift towards creating knowledge for sustainable development is the UN Agenda 21, drafted in 1992, which is a strategic document outlining strategies for the promotion of and education on the ideals of sustainability whose publication was supported by numerous international, regional and other organizations and which is to this day seen as a centrepiece of sustainable development planning.

## **6. In Conclusion**

As can be concluded from this paper, the attitude of the local inhabitants towards tourism and their knowledge about sustainability are key elements for the sustainable development of tourism. Tourism is generally seen in a positive manner, since it has a positive impact on the local inhabitants and is, as Klarić and Marković (2015) point out, one of the few industries showing positive trends and growth in Croatia. While it has been lauded as the saviour of many developing countries, mass tourism has also had a negative impact on some areas, which have suffered from environmental destruction and from being overcrowded, mostly due to poor prior planning and preparation (Choi, Sirakaya, 2005). That is why tourism nowadays is turning towards sustainability and towards cooperation with the local communities in order to manage destinations in a more sustainable,

environmentally aware manner. The local communities and local inhabitants are becoming more active in the planning and development of tourism within the framework of sustainability.

This research focuses on several different constructs within the framework of sustainable tourism development focused on its environmental, social and economic elements. The knowledge and attitudes of the local inhabitants on statements connected to those constructs are analysed and compared to the knowledge and attitudes of students of tourism. Comparing two studies based on the attitudes of students and the local inhabitants, by analysing the obtained results, it can be concluded that there is a weak negative correlation between the attitudes towards sustainable development and the habits of students from the students point of view, while from the point of view of the local inhabitants, a statistically significant correlation was found. Regarding gender and knowledge of environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainable development, there is no statistically significant difference in the survey of students, while in the survey of local inhabitants the difference is only present in the economic factor. The limitation of the work is reflected in the conduct of the research in a single county. For the future, it is proposed to conduct the same research in all coastal counties of the Republic of Croatia, so that, on the one hand, the results can be summarized at the level of all Adriatic counties and, on the other hand, a comparison between different counties will be possible. The results of this research can be used for planning of sustainable tourism strategies and of education strategies. While they show a level of knowledge and positive attitudes, they also pinpoint the need for further education on sustainable tourism. It is essential to introduce changes into the education system, so it includes the complexities of today's life and educates people on how to deal with them in a new, sustainable way in their everyday life.

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