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## MANAGEMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF WATER TOURISM FOR YOUTH IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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### Abstract\*

*Aim.* The current lifestyle of youth in the Czech Republic conforms to the global trend in the context of seeing the natural movement of a person. Free time of young people determines the interest of the activity with a mostly sedentary life style, especially the time that young people spend on social networks. These modern trends cause deterioration in the quality of life, depending on hypokinesia and the impact on health, particularly in relation to civilization diseases and obesity. As in all developed countries of the world, increasing numbers of obese children and overweight children can be observed; also in the Czech Republic, the number of children and young people with overweight and obesity increases. The basis of the changes in this sense can be seen in the motivation for a healthy lifestyle.

*Methods.* The paper deals with the modern management offering physical activities for youth and focused on the attitudes of youth towards water tourism. In this research, 21 students of Brno University of Technology were involved. Our research is based on personal surveys, interviews, stress tests, and statistical evaluations (Kruskal-Wallis test).

*Results.* Students are willing to invest in water tourism training more than €25. The interest of students in water tourism was encouraged by both their parents and the school. Girls reported higher levels of stress than boys (Kruskal-Wallis test) 0.01 level of statistical significance.

*Conclusions.* The results show that the innovation in water tourism menu increases its attractiveness in the selected locations and motivates the youth to focus on cultural and sightseeing activities along with physical activities.

*Keywords:* health, life style, youth, free time, physical activities, water tourism.

### Introduction

Tourism in the Czech Republic belongs to the historically most developed sport activities, which support a whole number of initiatives and events not only of regional character, but nowadays also in the international scope. With the development of society and scientific knowledge, a number of sport and physical activities are being developed; these are organized in the natural environment of man.

Tourism has developed from the original form of walking into a series of activities that may also have an adrenalin charge. In the last decade, hiking and outdoor activities have seen unprecedented development.

It is, inter alia, due to the introduction of school educational activities leading us from the very childhood to the relationship with nature and its protection.

As early as in the approaches of J. A. Comenius, we can find a positive effect of the love for nature and "free movement" in the nature to be beneficial for

human health.

Therefore, in particular in larger industrial areas, new legislation has been introduced into the school curriculum – outdoor activities as a mandatory weekly activity for children and the youth who can spend their time in a healthy natural environment. Thus, health care and quality of life becomes from the early childhood a condition for the so-called public health and is the subject of a number of political activities both at regional and national level.

In childhood, it is very important to pay increased attention to health care in the form of physical activities especially because of rapidly growing number of obese children who are not interested in any sport or physical activities.

Research in developed countries shows that the prevalence of overweight and obesity in children is soaring. E.g. in the UK, the number of obese children has tripled over the last 20 years (Kalman, Hamřik, Pavelka, 2009). Incidence of overweight and obesity among children in the Czech Republic was

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measured in primary schools in 2010. It was found out that boys had a higher rate of obesity and overweight - 19%; girls reported only 9% of obesity and overweight (Kalman, Sigmund, Hamřík, Benes, Benes Csémy, 2011). With increasing age, a passive way of life prevails, and adolescents gradually increase the percentage of obese and overweight people. The lifestyle of young generation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century focuses on social networks, and more teens prefer sedentary lifestyle. Research surveys of WHO suggest that a half of adolescents and adults (15 years old and over) in the Czech Republic has a higher than normal weight and this proportion is unable to reduce. In 2008 the population of the Czech Republic showed 17% of obesity and overweight and these figures are constantly increasing (Health 2020, 2014). The results show that hypokinesia and lifestyle diseases are one of the basic factors that affect the health of population. Improvement of current situation can only be approached with respect to a healthy lifestyle, which includes health care of every human in the form of physical activity. Scientific research shows that the mainstream of healthy lifestyle of the youth is obesity prevention through movement. It is recommended to devote at least 60-90 minutes a day to physical activities of moderate intensity (Zusková et al., 2015). However, because the performance-oriented sport and physical activities are not popular activities among the population, and especially among young people, tourism and its various forms offer a possibility of realization for these very inactive groups. Tourism, in this case, becomes a form of active rest, the process of regeneration for further work and activities appropriate to compensate mostly mental efforts. Then the effect is the reduction of unwanted completion of other activities (including stress), which, at the given moment, have lost their sense (Machač, Macháčová, 1991).

Many studies have shown (Frömel, Novosad & Svozil, 1999; Korvas, 2014) that tourism ranks among the fundamental physical activities outdoor; these are also the most frequent summer physical activities in the Czech Republic. The oldest record of a group touristic event in the Czech Republic is a Sněžka climb in 1557. Around the year 1800, with liberalization of the feudal system, possibilities opened for massive involvement in some sport disciplines; these were transferred from the knightly environment into towns and villages. Massive development was related especially to swimming and canoeing. *"The predecessor of canoeing can be considered small barges used by the youth, the so-*

*called Manas"* (Reitmayer, 1978, p. 47). In 1888, Vojtěch Naprstek founded the Club of Czech Tourists. The beginnings of camping are associated with the names of Svojsík, Foglar and the organizations Junák, Orel, YMCA, etc. Development of Czech sport in the sixties of the nineteenth century included also rowing. A number of rowing companies (e.g. Bohemia) arose. This development is credited, among others, to Josef Rössler-Orovsky (1869-1933), who was an excellent athlete and rower and founded the Czech Yacht Club in Prague in 1893. The beginnings of water tourism are linked to the development of rowing and Sokol. In 1860, English Rowing Club was established in Prague. In 1888, the Czech Tourist Club was founded. The first section of water scouts was founded in 1912 by Ořovský. In 1910, University Sport was founded; its integral part was also a section of water tourists. In 1913, Association of canoeists of Kingdom of Bohemia was founded and in 1919, Czech Union of canoeists and water tourists was formed.

Nature and its beauty have been sought after by man since ancient times, particularly for active relaxation; outdoor activities are associated with recreation and leisure time, not only for athletes, but especially for non-sporting population. Athletes then use the natural environment for active regeneration and fitness training. It has been proved that this form of sports training has a large impact on the development of athlete's personality and forming of his/her characteristic traits and hardiness (Macák, Hosek, 1993).

Tourism today is more known as outdoor activities and is described in particular in terms of kinanthropology as an activity which is divided into three basic directions both in summer and winter period:

Outdoor Activities

Outdoor Sports

Outdoor Recreation

Water tourism is the activity that develops every participant involved in this activity in a comprehensive way. It is a combination of movement on the water in the boat or its modification (canoes, rafts and kayaks, rowing boats, sea kayaks, dragon boats, marathon) with staying outdoor and camping trips. The basis is a good physical condition and a sufficient level of physical skills, including operating a boat on differently challenging water terrain, swimming and rescuing when flowing through white water. At the same time, paddlers are placed with fairly high requirements as for the level of professional - technical knowledge, skills and



experience. Similarly to other forms of tourism, water tourism is characterized by three basic components:

- specific physical performance,
- cultural-sightseeing activity,
- professional-technical skills and knowledge.

In terms of physical performance, it is the activity that uses the skills acquired through water tourism training. Intensity of physical performance depends on the nature of descending terrain. The basis is practising and mastering of basic paddling strokes, including a basic forward stroke, reverse stroke, sweep stroke (arc, sweeping), sweep stroke backwards (breakage), draw stroke (White et al., 2001; Korvas et al., 2007).

The subject of cultural - sightseeing activity in water tourism is exploring locations in which we operate, i.e. geographic, economic, environmental aspects, the respective flora and fauna, cultural landmarks and community life, its history and present. Water tourism is quite demanding on the material equipment, which is of course also necessary to keep in good condition.

Water tourism facilities can be divided into equipment and accessories. The term equipment includes boats, paddles or covering blankets, the term accessories includes protective and rescue aids. A good feeling in water tourism necessarily includes clothing, i.e. white-water jacket, trousers or wetsuit. All this acts as a protection against the cold and partly against strikes in the water while swimming. Boating footwear must adequately protect the foot, should not slip and must not hinder abandoning the boat and swimming. A covering blanket is needed in a more difficult water terrain where waves may pour the boat. A life jacket is mandatory from the difficulty of WW1. At the events organized by institutions, the life jacket and helmet are always an obligatory part of the equipment. It should fit tightly to the body and be well fixed; it must match the size of water tourist. The jacket helps to keep the swimming water tourist above the water, absorbs shock while swimming in the water and warms. A white water jacket should have a minimum displacement of 75 N, or 10 N per 10 kg of weight. The jacket is the only tool assisting the water tourist when overthrown into the water. However it is not a rescue aid for a non-swimmer or unconscious person. A helmet mainly protects the scalp, temples and nape of waterman. It is not recommended to substitute the water tourist helmet by another kind of helmet, e.g. cycling or climbing (Bílý et al., 2001; Novakova 2007, in. Korvas et al., 2007, p. 36).

Water tourism also includes rescue aids (Doe et al., 2011):

- throw bag,
- snap-hook, rope, knife (to secure dangerous sections, or rescue)
- security against boat sinking (inflatable bags from PVC or PUR foil)
- spare paddle,
- whistle (easy signaling)
- mobile phone,
- first aid kit.

Management of outdoor activities focuses not only on a healthy lifestyle, but also on the activities that can represent a very strong human experience. It develops human personality in all spheres, especially in the so-called hardiness. The basic role of management of sports activities is given by the paradigm of professional change and skills of others in the performance of all participants. Therefore, it is always important to encourage the motivation of all participants of sport and physical activities to primarily utilize the locomotion power of individuals and group cohesion for mutual cooperation leading to the team's success. Hence, the task of sports manager is a productive use of force of participants in the event to meet the set target (Hroník, 2008). In practice, it is important to respond to changing conditions of offer and innovation that lead to improvement of work in the implementation of water tourism. A sports manager must be able to respond to the needs of individuals so that the result was always well performed action leading to health and actively and meaningfully spent free time. In addition to the competencies of a manager of water tourism course, the performance and the output of participants are decisively influenced by their attitudes and shared values. Thus, a relatively static scheme (only implementation of the action) becomes a dynamic product (active involvement of participants in solving current variables in daily output in water tourism). A good performance of water tourism participants must be always linked with a performance-oriented culture focused on both individual and group performances with the aim to meet the specific objective of the proposed action (Plamínek, 2005). Then, self-profit is to successfully overcome the obstacles on the water trail and the joy of performance and mutual cooperation in meeting a daily target of the group. The added value is then development of trust between the individuals, development of communication and cooperation when tackling the problems and creating the strategies for coping with new water trails planned in



the program. At the same time, incentive attitudes are created to raise aspirations and self confidence of participants in overcoming unexpected obstacles and unexpected situations they can face in water tourism. In such a case, a course of water tourism can be considered a team activity developing cooperation among both the individuals and the groups along with confidence and personal development. Up-to-date approaches to the management of sport events are based on the principle of benchmarking and reengineering, i.e. continuous improvement, total quality management of offered products towards a demand and customers, so as to use time as a competitive tool to keep up with the conditions of competition. It is necessary to constantly change the boundaries of the management of water tourism and create new markets and products so that new ways for development of water tourism can be offered (Gibson, 2007).

Each activity of water tourism must be pre-planned and well prepared. With increasing demand for quality water tourism event, the question arises whether clients are satisfied with existing programs and teaching style of water tourism (Pelánek, 2008). With growing interest in quality programs, more organizations are engaged in the offer of activities and strive to meet the requirements of clients. Outdoor activities are closely associated with a healthy lifestyle and fitness. They bring about education, formation of values and personal development. Outdoor activities also have their own economic benefit and contribute to the formation of the so-called "outdoor industry". Implementation of outdoor activities includes a large number of human activities and is based on the creative approach of the organizers. Creativity brings about even greater demands on organizers (Neuman, 2000). An organizer of outdoor activities is a kind of managerial personnel, i.e. a manager. "Management is a specific kind of human activity ensuring the activities of things (elements) or the action of other people in line with the intention of the person who actually manages these things or people." (Grünwald, 2007). In order to ensure a success of a tourist event, it must be well prepared. The event manager is responsible for the educational, organizational, economic, and safety provision of the event. Specific activities include the provision of the program based on the requirements and expectations of participants, selection and training of lecturers and instructors, choice of medical staff, selection of appropriate and functional educational aids, provision of safety elements, logistical support of action and respect for

cultural aspects of the environment in the selected location. Quality preparation is based on theoretical knowledge and practical skills of the manager. These include (according to Korvas, 2013):

- technical mastery of basics of outdoor sports (basic locomotive skills, e.g. movement on the calm water, etc.)
- knowledge of theoretical basis of management of outdoor activities (strategic games, teamwork),
- knowledge of communication and creative programs (e.g. promotion),
- presentation skills,
- knowledge of safety rules and first aid.

When planning daily water trails for water tourism, it is necessary to respect the basic principles of planning similar to hiking, and also the following factors should be taken into account:

- usual implementation of water tourism is between 9.00 and 17.00 with sufficient breaks to have a rest
- difficulty of river and character of watercourse, amount and type of obstacles (fallen trees, thresholds, weirs, dams, etc.).
- water tourist experience, age and number of participants in the group, homogeneity of groups
- flow velocity and flow rate on the day of the event
- seasons of the year and climatic conditions of the area
- physical fitness and level of water tourist skills of participants (Nováková 2007 in Korvas et al., 2007, p. 36).

### Methods

Interest of young generation in the current offer of water tourism in the Czech Republic is rather a side hobby and leisure activity. In the portfolio of sports and physical activities, adrenaline and adventure sports prevail over the sports previously done by a large part of population. Thus, so popular football, hockey and other sport games suddenly become more of a recreational sport and we can see a development of floor ball, baseball, bouldering, in-line skating, etc. Water tourism is popular especially among young people who were made familiar with this form of tourism in their childhood, having personal experience. Therefore, we focused on mapping the current interest of BUT students in water tourism and its forms within a long-term cooperation, including the courses for those who are interested. To handle this task, we asked the CESA BUT students, who enrolled in the course of water

tourism, for cooperation. We have compiled a personal survey for students, based on mapping the basic personal histories of individuals, including the monitoring of students attitudes towards water tourism.

The objective of our study was to map the current approach of adolescents to the portfolio of leisure activities with a focus on water tourism at the selected university and to verify their attitudes towards this sport. To meet this objective, we have set up the following research question:

How can we make the portfolio of sports and physical activities at CESA BUT, with special focus on water tourism, more attractive through sports management?

To answer this question, we determined the following tasks:

1. to address a selected group of BUT students interested in water tourism and ask for cooperation
2. to construct a personal survey, prepare a stress test (Selye, 1993 Křivohlavý, 2001) for the needs of research investigation and conduct our own research
3. to prepare the product portfolio that meets the needs of young generation
4. to implement the selected product with a subsequent analysis from the perspective of both the participant and the manager
5. to assemble conclusions from the obtained results

The research was conducted in the period II / 2016; a total of 40 BUT students were asked for cooperation; 21 of them agreed to cooperate (16 males and 5 females, aged 19-32 years, average age was 23 years). All were full-time students in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs at five faculties of BUT (FEKT, FSE, FP, FAST, FIT). A personal survey was compiled according to the needs of research and contained a total of 14 questions related to age, sex, studies and students attitudes towards the proposed activities focused on water sports. Statistical evaluation of the obtained results was realized through the Kruskal-Wallis test ( $p < 0.01$ ).

## Results

The obtained results were analyzed and evaluated to serve for further research. All respondents could swim. The financial demands of water tourism courses show that students are willing to invest in training, usually more than 650,- CZK (25 €), only 3 participants are not willing to invest any money (Fig. 1).

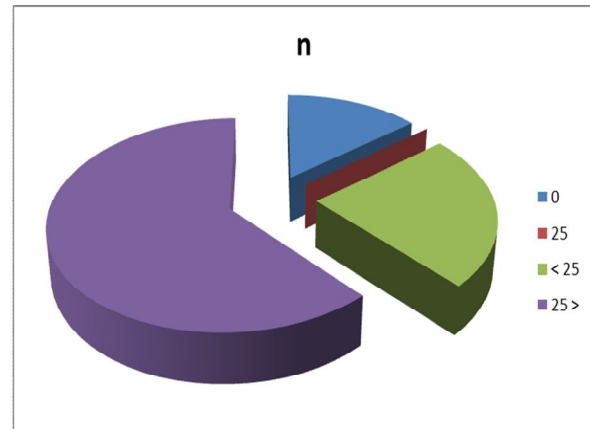


Fig. 1: Willingness to invest in training

Interest in water tourism for the questionnaire file was evident from various sources (Fig. 2); most students were brought to this sport by friends and at school (31% and 28%), respectively.

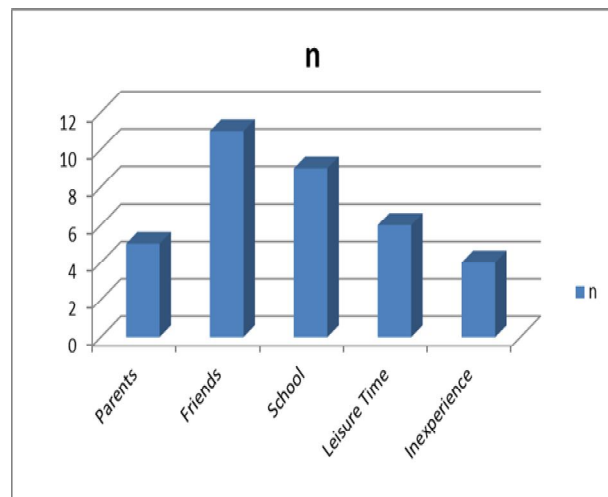
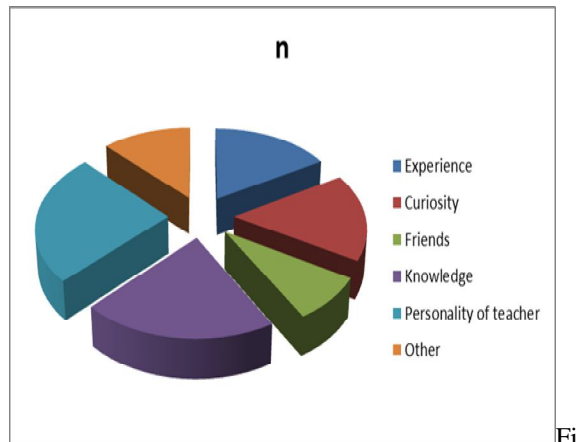


Fig. 2: Source of students interest in water tourism

Motivation of students for water tourism stemmed mainly from the personality of the teacher who ran the courses of water tourism, as well as from previous experience and curiosity (Fig. 3).





g. 3: Motivational sources for interest in water tourism

Students generally expect improvements of already acquired skills and would like to continue in other activities even after the end of the course.

As for management of water tourism, we examined the preference for the length of the course or one-day activities and further interest in skill development of individuals. Majority of surveyed students prefer a one-day activity - a total of 12 students (57%), two-day activities - a total of 8 students (38%), the rest prefer multiple-day activities (5%). Some students agreed with several variants on the menu. Skill development in various forms of water tourism appeared to be very diverse; they all expect improvement, most of the surveyed students in multiple forms of water tourism (Fig. 4).

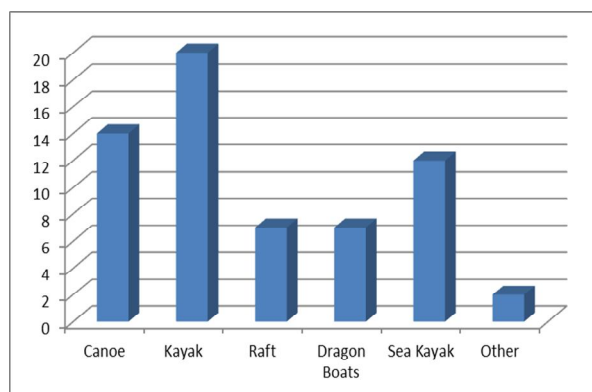


Fig. 4: Interest of students in skills development

A personal survey among students of water tourism shows that many students are trying to develop their locomotive skills based on the current interest and the portfolio of Centre of Sports Activities, BUT, or according to their own experience

based on numerous sources. Most students are motivated by friends and the school environment. The main prerequisite for their participation in this type of sport and physical activity is their own experience.

For students, we have also organised measurements of the actual level of stress, we searched for the relationship between being stressed and doing sports in the selected group of students. The stress level at all probands corresponds to low stress levels; therefore the students are not stressed. Girls exhibit higher stress levels than boys (Kruskal-Wallis test) 0.01 level of statistical significance (Fig. 5).

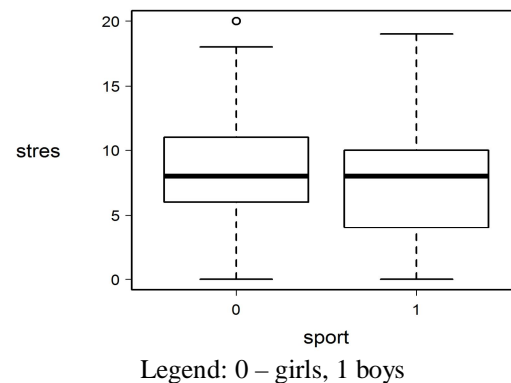


Fig. 5: Level of stress in the investigated group of students

### Discussion

The issue of the examination of the leisure sports and physical activities of college students in the Czech Republic was examined by number of experts, who have found that increasing numbers of students with hipokinesis, obese students and with age interest in physical activity offered at universities is dropping (Pelka, Budínská, 2001; Korvas, Charvát, 2008; Valjent, 2010; Nykodým, Zvonař, Sebera, 2012; Mitáš et al., 2013; Janošková, 2012). On the popularity of individual leisure activities for university students lead meetings with friends, listening to music and watching television, after that sports are coming. Students of higher grades devote more time to work to be more financially secure. At the same time the motivation to power sporting activities is decreasing, students are rather dedicated to health-oriented mobility activities.

International studies are showing that groups of physically active college students are significantly different from the physically inactive groups in overall lifestyle, usually created by environment and



peers. The Belgian research shows that the primary group of the immediacy of personal contacts are the most important socialization in the creation of a positive relation to the regular physical activities, when, in particular, the feeling of physical competence in the process of learning sports skills in this regard is irreplaceable (Rzewnicki et al., 2003). Significant influence on the shaping of social inequalities related to physical activity and the formation of sports skills is being confirmed repeatedly. University student without physical activities have a greater tendency to obesity or overweight (Zusková et al., 2015). Management of sport activities at universities in the environment of the Czech Republic is in recent years only appearing, therefore not much researches are devoted to this issue so far. According to Parks (1998), the academic environment is essential for the implementation of the management of sports and physical activities of university students' essential for the formation of healthy lifestyle in adulthood. The results of research among students here in Ostrava shows that for practicing of experience sports activities is needed sufficient motivation. Experience activities include not only climbing activities, but also water tourism (Durdová, 2014).

### Conclusion

The results show that water tourism represents, for a part of university students, an interesting sport and physical activity, which is mainly used for their recreation and entertainment. However, semester tuition does not fully correspond to the activities of study programmers at Brno University of Technology; during the semester, many students participate in internships and practical training in industrial agglomerations; thus they do not have sufficient time for regular physical training. The opportunity to apply up-to-date knowledge of sport management led us to linking of short one or two day activities with cultural-historical experience along with teambuilding activities. Therefore, we proposed several variants to enrich tuition opportunities and to extend the product portfolio. Here is an example of portfolio:

#### Czech Republic:

##### Šumava: rivers Vltava and Otava

1<sup>st</sup> day: Meeting at the station and informing the participants in the form of teambuilding activities (1<sup>st</sup> Phase of group dynamics – formation of a group, game to develop communication and cooperation), loading

the boats and material and transfer to the camp Lenora, accommodation in the camp - (2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of group dynamics – formation of groups, selection of shared space, game to occupy group posts)

Descending the Vltava river: Horní Vltavice - Soumarský bridge, ca.10 km – fulfilling the task at hand during the trip - adventure game - development of cooperation within the group).

Social evening – familiarization games

2<sup>nd</sup> day Descending the Vltava river: Soumarský bridge - Nová Pec, ca. 25 km (fulfilling the group task – teambuilding activity – tackling shared tasks at designated posts)

Transfer to the Otava river (3<sup>rd</sup> Phase of group dynamics - storming)

Accommodation in the camp Rejštejn

Social evening – game to perform meeting and preparation of tourist activity (positions, brainstorming)

3<sup>rd</sup> day: Hiking along the Vydra river: Modrava - Antýgl – Čenková píla, ca. 15km, geocaching in groups and fulfilling the tasks at hand (4<sup>th</sup> Phase of group dynamics – stabilization)

4<sup>th</sup> day: Descending the Otava river: Sušice – Horažďovice, ca. 20 km (5<sup>th</sup> Phase of group dynamics - productivity and cooperation, fulfilling the team tasks)

During the water trail, a visit to the ruins of Gothic castle Rábí and Prácheň

Afternoon departure for home, arrival in the evening.

#### Slovakia, Poland

##### Rivers: Dunajec, Váh, Hornád, Orava

1<sup>st</sup> day: Meeting at the station and familiarizing the participants in the form of teambuilding activities (1<sup>st</sup> Phase of group dynamics – formation of a group, game to develop communication and cooperation), loading the boats and material and transfer to the camp in Liptovský Mikuláš, accommodation in the camp - (2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of group dynamics – formation of a group, selection of shared space, game to occupy group posts)

2<sup>nd</sup> day: Descending the Černý Váh river: Svarin – Liptovský Hrádok, ca. 15 km (fulfilling the group tasks – teambuilding activity – tackling shared tasks at designated posts)



- On return, bath in thermal spa – Liptovský Ján
- 3<sup>rd</sup> day: Descending the Orava river: Nižná – Dolný Kubín, ca. 25 km, fulfilling of team tasks (3<sup>rd</sup> Phase of group dynamics - storming). Afternoon visit to Oravsky castle (tackling the group tasks – game to develop teams)
- 4<sup>th</sup> day: Descending the Hornád river: Hrabušice – Čingov, ca. 20 km geocaching in groups and fulfilling the tasks at hand (4<sup>th</sup> Phase of group dynamics – stabilization)
- 5<sup>th</sup> day: Descending the Dunajec river: Stiavnica – Krosienko (Poland), ca. 25 km fulfilling the group tasks (5<sup>th</sup> Phase of group dynamics – performing)  
Social evening – game to perform meeting and preparation of tourist activity (positions, brainstorming)
- 6<sup>th</sup> day: Descending the Váh river: Liptovský Hrádok –Liptovský Mikuláš  
Afternoon departure for home, arrival in the evening.

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For all of our participants from my study I want to say thank you.

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