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***THE INFLUENCE OF TOURIST'S EDUCATION AND MATERIAL STATUS
ON THE EVALUATION OF TOURIST SPACE OF A SEASIDE RESORT ON
EXAMPLE OF ŁEBA RESORT***

В статті аналізується вплив освіти та матеріального стану туриста на процес оцінки польського морського курорту. Для дослідження був вибраний один із найвідоміших морських курортів Польщі в Поморському воєводстві – Леба. В статті використані результати анкетного опитування туристів, які відвідували курорт влітку 2008 р.

В статье анализируется влияния образования и материального положения туриста на процесс оценки польского морского курорта. Для исследования был выбран

один из самых известных морских курортов Польши в Поморском воеводстве – Леба. В статье использованы результаты анкетного опроса туристов, которые посетили курорт Лебу летом 2008 г.

This article includes an issue of the analysis of the influence of the tourist education and material status on the evaluation process of tourist polish seaside resort. As an example was used example of Łeba – one of the main polish coastal resorts situated in the middle part of the pomorskie coastal region. For the analysis was used the results of the questionnaire survey which was carried out over the group of the tourists visiting Łeba during the summer holiday of 2008 year.

The problem of perception of tourist space is an interesting issue within the range of interest of tourism-oriented disciplines. For many years this particular issue has been a subject of focus for representatives of numerous tourism-centered disciplines – sociology, psychology, pedagogy as well as natural sciences, particularly geography of tourism and geoecology. In the group of natural sciences, the issue of landscape perception is the field of interest in particular for researchers representing geoecology as well as physical geography and geography of tourism [2, 3,4,5,6].

The very term of perception has found numerous definitions in the field literature [5,6,7] sees perception as a complex of impulses – information reaching the brain where it is processed into sensations, impressions, associations which determine the action of an organism. According to Kożuchowski [5], perception is a process of observation of reality, in particular – of the environment remaining within the reach of senses. In this study what is meant by the process of perception is the cognitive process consisting in the subjective observation of the elements of tourist space that determine the action of a tourist within the space. The above-mentioned process takes place on two different levels: the sensory-motor as well as the significative-functional one.

The process of observation on the sensory-motor level is of an automatic character and is connected with sensorial observation of reality performed by sense organs (sight, hearing, touch). Its effects are the impulses received by an organism owing to which (among the others) the sounds, colours, coarseness and smoothness are recognized.

Tourist attractiveness of Łeba

In this article an attempt has been made to focus on the issue of the perception of tourist space of a seaside spa as well as the influence on this perception process of two chosen socio-economic variables – education and marital status which characterise the chosen group of tourists. For this purpose a case study of a seaside tourist/leisure resort of Łeba was used.

Łeba is one of the main seaside spas in the area of Polish coast of the Baltic Sea. Its tourist attractiveness is a result of a complex of features which predestine this place to cultivate leisure tourism of the 3 s type.

The tourist-related attractiveness of Łeba is, to the largest extent, a consequence of its seaside location and a dominant type of qualities of seaside leisure tourism. On the other hand, however, Łeba and its immediate surroundings boast a number of amenities encouraging the tourists to pursue

traditional sightseeing tourism. A particular role in their group is played by the Słowiński National Park, known for its extensive stretch of sandbar and flood plain with numerous vast post-glacial coastal lakes, and in particular for its natural seaside dunes, which form one of the largest complexes of seaside dunes in Europe.

This area is a significant attractor on the tourist/sightseeing map of Poland. In addition, Łeba and its surroundings boast the following places-amenities of a tourist/sightseeing character:

- interesting museum objects including the Natural Museum of the Słowiński National Park in Smołdzino as well as a heritage park of the Słowińska Village in Kluki,
- Rowokół – the highest elevation in the belt of the Baltic shoreland,
- numerous villages with interesting examples of half-timbered construction characteristic for this part of the Baltic shoreland,
- numerous places of Słowiński heritage with rich history, monuments and traditions reminiscent of the ethnic group of Słowińcy.

An important element of tourist and recreational attractiveness of Łeba is its peripheral location in relation to big industrial and urbanised centres of Poland.

*The perception of attractiveness of tourist space of Łeba
according to tourists*

Tourist attractiveness of Łeba in connection with a massive scale of tourist traffic particularly during the holiday/leave season was an incentive to conduct a research focusing on the perception of a tourist seaside spa according to the opinion of the visiting tourists taking into consideration spatial, demographic and socio-economic variables that characterise the community of tourists coming to Łeba. The source material used in the considerations was the results of surveys conducted in July of 2008 on the beaches of Łeba. 400 tourists participated in the above-mentioned survey.

The main research issues of the study were:

- identification of the main attributes of tourist attractiveness of Łeba as well as the assessment of its amenities and advantages as a receptive place by the surveyed tourists,
- the assessment of influence of education and marital status characterising tourists on the perception and evaluation of tourist space of Łeba through the prism of the main advantages, disadvantages and attributes of its tourist attractiveness according to tourists.

In addition, on the basis of the survey-collected data an attempt was made to estimate the influence of the factor of the place of residence (size rank of tourists' places of origin) on the perception of Łeba as a tourist centre.

In the surveyed population of tourists, in general the largest number of them came from locations in the Pomorskie Province – close to 32 percent of the surveyed tourists. Mazowieckie, Wielkopolskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie provinces each contributed close to 11 percent, and Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Dolnośląskie provinces – approximately 5 percent each (fig.1).

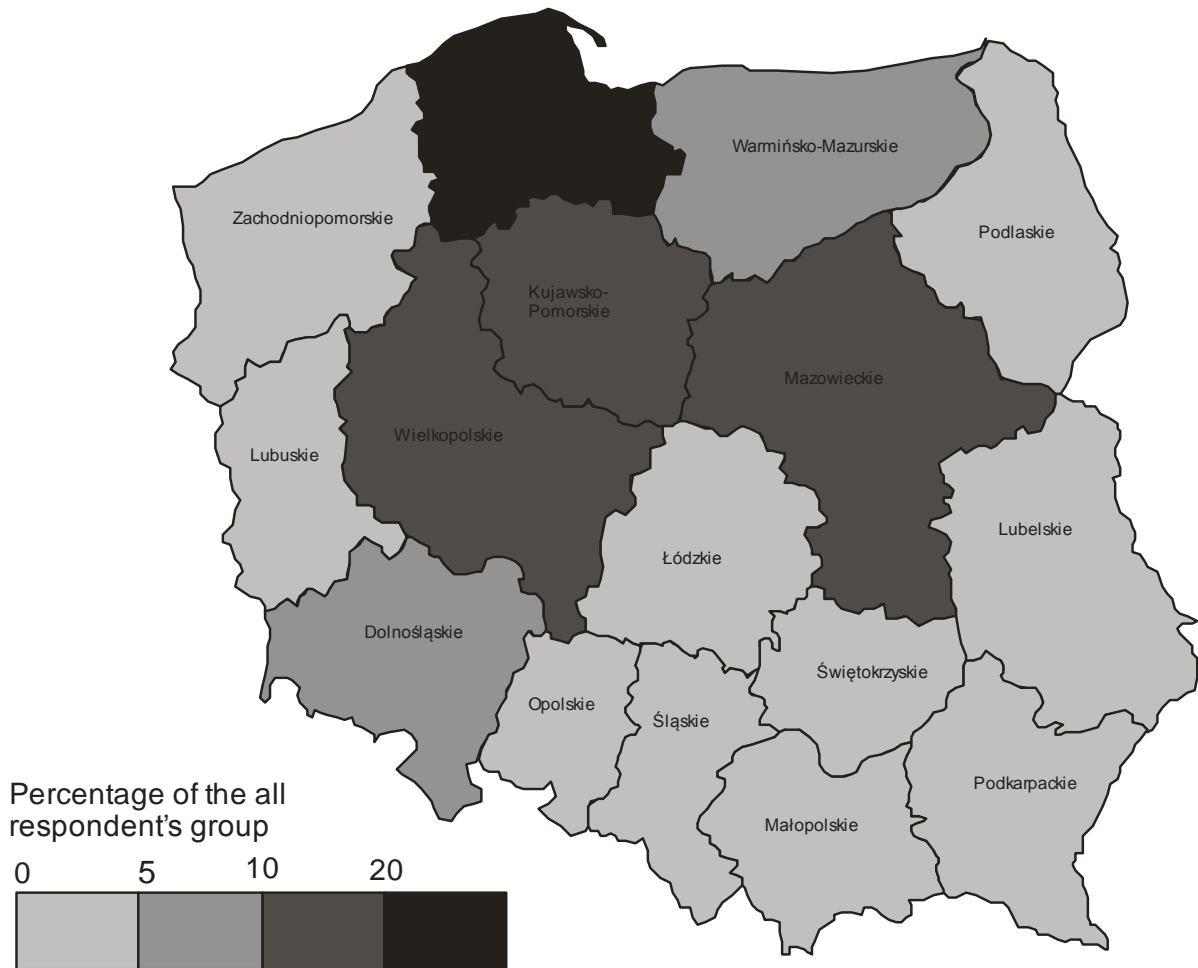


Fig. 1 The origin places of the examined tourists resting in Łeba during the summer holiday of 2008 year

Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

The surveyed respondents came from 222 places altogether, the largest number – 17 people – from Warsaw, 13 people came from Łębork, 10 people from Olsztyn. Poznań, Toruń and Bydgoszcz each had 7 representatives. The map of tourists' places of origin suggests that the range of spatial influence of Łeba was positively correlated with its spatial accessibility (the distance from the tourists' places of origin) as well as with the degree of urbanization of tourists' area of origin. The evidence is the insignificant tourist traffic from the farthest situated areas of South-East Poland and a considerable participation of tourists from Mazowieckie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Pomorskie provinces.

For the purpose of establishing the image of tourist perception of Łeba, tourists were asked about the main tourist attractions associated with the place and its immediate surroundings. The analysis of the perception of tourist attractiveness of Łeba and its surroundings on the basis of attractions most frequently associated with this area led to the possibility to isolate certain dominants of its attractiveness. (fig.2)

The most frequently indicated amenities of Łeba and its surroundings by surveyed tourists were: the Słowiński National Park, seaside dunes and the

lighthouses: Stilo and in Czolpino. Altogether 56 percent of tourists mentioned those 3 attractions. Other more frequently indicated distinguishing marks of tourist attractiveness of Łeba and its surroundings were: the aquarium, coastal lakes of Łebsko and Gardno, museums in Kluki and Smoldzino and the sea itself– including the cruises on it. In addition, twelve more symbols of tourist attractiveness of Łeba and its surroundings were indicated. A fact worth mentioning is that attractions indicated by tourists were most frequently associated with surroundings of Łeba, and to a lesser extent with Łeba itself.

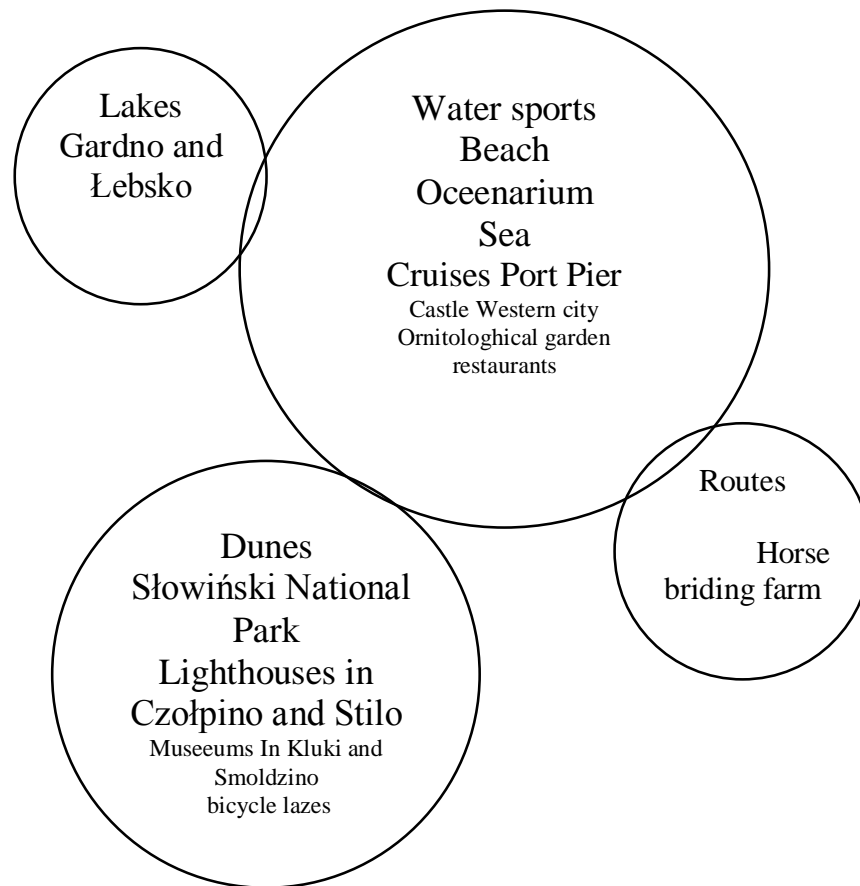


Fig. 2 The dominants of Łeba and its surroundings attractiveness in tourist's opinion

Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

Apart from the questions concerning amenities of Łeba which made it possible to establish main traits of tourist attractiveness of this spa, tourists also indicated the most relevant advantages and disadvantages of Łeba as a receptive place. In the group of responses to this question the prevailing part concerned the qualities resulting from its seaside location (seaside location- 28%, the wide and clean beach (18%), the sea air (10%), dunes (8%), cultural events – 6%), nice, and clean city (5%).

In addition, tourists more often mentioned in the group of advantages the diverse cultural/entertainment offer, large concentration of tourists during the season, the possibility to practise water sports and taste fish dishes. A frequently

pointed out advantage was also a peripheral location of Łeba in relation to main industrial and urbanised areas of Poland.

According to tourists, the most frequently indicated disadvantage of Łeba was the high price level of offered services (21%), especially those in the areas of gastronomy, tickets, transport and entertainment. Among the shortcomings of Łeba and its surroundings the following were frequently indicated: insufficient tourist management (underdeveloped accommodation base and a shortage of trading and service companies), 'a general impression of uncleanness' (dirty, littered beach, dirty town, lack of wastebaskets and toilets, common about 32%). In addition, tourists rather frequently indicated the limitations which were connected to town's poor accessibility of both the external and internal character. Its characteristic points were manifested in the shortage of parking places, a general impression of congestion in the town, difficulties in access to Łeba by car as well as lack of railway connections.

According to Krzymowska Kostrowicka, an important element conditioning the perception of tourist reception areas are socio-cultural traits [7].

The influence of the tourists education and marital status on the the perception and evaluation of tourist space of Łeba

For the purpose of establishing main determinants of the perception of Łeba by tourists an image was confronted of the perception of tourist attractiveness of Łeba and its advantages and disadvantages as a receptive place in the opinion of tourists – with the data concerning education and material status characterising tourists. In order to establish the scope of influence of these factors characterising the surveyed group of tourists over the indicated tourist attractions of Łeba and its surroundings as well as advantages and disadvantages of Łeba as a tourist receptive place, Spearman's rank correlation coefficients were used. Images of attractions, advantages and disadvantages of Łeba and its surroundings as a tourist resort were arranged according to appropriate ranks, and subsequently Spearman's rank correlation coefficients were computed for the obtained images and education and material status characterising the surveyed group of tourists.

To the smallest extent the images of tourist perception of Łeba (tourist attractions, advantages and disadvantages) are correlated between the tourists' populations of higher and the lowest (elementary and incomplete elementary) education levels. On the other hand, the images of tourist perception of Łeba of the respondents representing higher education and secondary and postsecondary ones are correlated to a much larger extent. An exception is the situation in which the images of disadvantages of Łeba as a tourist resort for the population of respondents with higher and elementary education levels are correlated to the highest degree.

The analysis of coefficients correlation of education level of the surveyed population of respondents and their images of tourist perception of Łeba

suggests an important influence of the level of education on the process of shaping tourist perception image of Łeba. (tab. 1 a,b,c)

Tab. 1a Spearman's rank correlation coefficients of the tourists image perception with the tourist's level of education

<i>Variables</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1</i>	1,000000	0,413384	0,446544	0,313993	0,472657
<i>2</i>	0,413384	1,000000	0,605571	0,737076	0,707637
<i>3</i>	0,446544	0,605571	1,000000	0,694799	0,788468
<i>4</i>	0,313993	0,737076	0,694799	1,000000	0,787991
<i>5</i>	1,000000	0,413384	0,446544	0,313993	0,472657

Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

Legend: 1- elementary and incomplete education, 2- professional training, 3-secondary education, 4- postsecondary education, 5- higher education

Tab. 1b Spearman's rank correlation coefficients of advantages of Łeba as a tourist education with tourists level of education

<i>Variables</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1</i>	1,000000	0,355494	0,474908	0,351455	0,647948
<i>2</i>	0,355494	1,000000	0,708513	0,799447	0,721551
<i>3</i>	0,474908	0,708513	1,000000	0,848375	0,857747
<i>4</i>	0,351455	0,799447	0,848375	1,000000	0,803758
<i>5</i>	0,647948	0,721551	0,857747	0,803758	1,000000

Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

Legend: 1- elementary and incomplete education, 2- professional training, 3-secondary education, 4- postsecondary education, 5- higher education

Tab. 1c Spearman's rank correlation coefficients of disadvantages of Łeba as a tourist education with tourists level of education

<i>Variables</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1</i>	1,000000	0,198605	0,395684	0,180867	1,000000
<i>2</i>	0,198605	1,000000	0,791093	0,825493	0,198605
<i>3</i>	0,395684	0,791093	1,000000	0,864561	0,395684
<i>4</i>	0,180867	0,825493	0,864561	1,000000	0,180867
<i>5</i>	1,000000	0,198605	0,395684	0,180867	1,000000

Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

Legend: 1- elementary and incomplete education, 2- professional training, 3-secondary education, 4- postsecondary education, 5- higher education

An important factor determining the tourist activity is the material status [1]. Conducted analyses, however, indicate that the image of the perception of tourist attractiveness as well as advantages and disadvantages of Łeba as a

receptive place in the above-mentioned categories of tourists taking into consideration their education level is similar (tab.2 a,b.c).

Tab. 2a Spearman's rank correlation coefficients of the tourists image perception with the tourist's material status

<i>Variables</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>1</i>	1,000000	0,835746	0,851022	0,817985
<i>2</i>	0,835746	1,000000	0,847816	0,760034
<i>3</i>	0,851022	0,847816	1,000000	0,920561
<i>4</i>	0,817985	0,760034	0,920561	1,000000

Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

Legenda: 1- average income per capita 0-500 zł, 2- average income per capita 501-1000 zł 3- average income per capita 1001-2000, 4- average income per capita 2000 zł.

Obtained results of Spearman's rank correlation coefficients suggest the highest level of this variable correlation with the images of attractiveness of tourist space of Łeba as well as its advantages and disadvantages as a tourist receptive place, and simultaneously, the most unified image of the perception of tourist attractiveness of Łeba and its advantages and disadvantages as a receptive place taking into consideration the material status of the surveyed population of tourists.

Thus, the material status differentiates the image of the tourist perception of Łeba only to a slight extent in the group of surveyed tourists. (tab. 2a, b, c). A slightly higher than average, in the analysis of these variables, is the correlation level of the declared images of perception (tourist attractions of Łeba) as well as viewing advantages and disadvantages of Łeba as a receptive tourist resort in the higher categories isolated on the basis of the material status of tourist groups. The images of the tourist perception of Łeba taking into consideration the material status of the visiting tourists are nonetheless approximate to one another which suggest much lower influence of material status on the image of the tourist perception of the place in the group of studied variables.

Tab. 2b Spearman's rank correlation coefficients of the tourists image perception with the tourist's material status

<i>Variables</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>1</i>	1,000000	0,675713	0,709764	0,697418
<i>2</i>	0,675713	1,000000	0,752240	0,638712
<i>3</i>	0,709764	0,752240	1,000000	0,831892
<i>4</i>	0,697418	0,638712	0,831892	1,000000

Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

Legenda: 1- average income per capita 0-500 zł, 2- average income per capita 501-1000 zł 3- average income per capita 1001-2000, 4- average income per capita 2000 zł

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Tab. 2c Spearman's rank correlation coefficients of the tourists image perception with the tourist's material status

<i>Variables</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>1</i>	1,000000	0,927718	0,854437	0,923971
<i>2</i>	0,927718	1,000000	0,831820	0,924950
<i>3</i>	0,854437	0,831820	1,000000	0,880595
<i>4</i>	0,923971	0,924950	0,880595	1,000000

Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

Legenda: 1 – average income per capita 0-500 zł, 2- average income per capita 501-1000 zł 3 – average income per capita 1001-2000, 4- average income per capita 2000 zł

Conclusion

According to tourists' opinion, Łeba is perceived to a largest extent through the prism of – on the one hand – its function: a big receptive centre of seaside leisure tourism of 3s type; on the other hand, the natural amenities of the border belt between the land and the sea and the closeness of the Słowiński National Park are important factors of tourist attractiveness of Łeba. Additional significant attractors of Łeba and its surroundings deeply rooted in tourists' consciousness are museums in Smołdzino, the heritage park in Kluki and lighthouses in Stilo and Czołpino. In addition, tourists often emphasise the advantage of the peripheral location of Łeba in relation to the main tourist/sightseeing centres of Poland. Among certain barriers and shortcomings of Łeba are its limited accessibility, the impression of congestion and uncleanliness as well as the fact that for a considerable group of tourists Łeba remains an 'expensive' tourist destination. Shortcomings of Łeba which are frequently mentioned by tourists are the factors of its underdeveloped general tourist-related infrastructure as well as congestion of this place during the season and «an impression of uncleanliness».

The image of the perception of tourist attractiveness of Łeba as well as its advantages and disadvantages as a receptive place suggests a higher influence of education level on the perception of Łeba in the eyes of tourists. The studied images of perception are positively correlated, however, in the case of certain

variables obtained correlation levels are significantly lower. Thus, it might be argued on this basis that socio-economic variables to a certain extent play a modifying role in the scope of the processes of the perception of the tourist space of tourists. The level of education most significantly differentiates the perception of Łeba as a tourist resort as well as that of attractiveness of Łeba and its surroundings. Tourists' material status was the variable which to a significantly lower extent modifies the average image of the tourist perception of the place.

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