

# SUMMER CAMPS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANISERS

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** Summer camps are the most important form of organised leisure activity for children and adolescents, and their popularity has been increasing year after year. Providing tourism services for this group of recipients constitutes a big challenge for the organisers because they have to satisfy the expectations of not only the participants but also their parents. Hence, the aim of the study was to obtain data making it possible to estimate the degree of convergence between the needs of summer camp participants, their parents' needs, and the tourism product, that is summer camp. **Materials and methods.** The study involved one hundred participants of a summer camp, aged 11-17 years. A diagnostic survey carried using direct interviews and questionnaires. The data have been processed and analysed statistically by means of Excel and Statistica v.12; a significance test was used for comparing two proportions at the significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$  (with  $p < \alpha$  indicating the presence of statistically significant differences and  $p \geq \alpha$  indicating a lack of statistically significant differences). **Results.** The children of educated mothers participated in summer camps significantly more often than children of mothers with vocational education ( $p = 0.0115$ ) and secondary education ( $p = 0.0422$ ). When selecting the summer camp, most respondents (44.57%) paid attention to the degree of correspondence between the programme and their interests. The camps that were the most popular were sport summer camps (41.30%). Boys chose survival summer camps more often than girls ( $p = 0.0360$ ) whereas girls preferred active and sailing summer camps ( $p = 0.006$ ). The most attention in a summer camp was paid to the staff. **Conclusions.** When choosing a summer camp, children and parents pay special attention to whether or not the programme is rich in attractions; however, it is the staff that conditions positive emotions of the participants as well as their good memories. Organisers know how important the staff are and that they are the warrant of the summer camp's success. The results presented confirm that preparing a summer camp offering requires much work and involvement because one must satisfy the expectations of both participants and parents, who use different criteria of camp evaluation.

**Key words:** summer camp, children, adolescents, parents, tourism