

**DETERMINANTS OF TOURIST ACTIVITY AND TOURIST  
DESTINATION PERCEPTION ON THE EXAMPLE  
OF SELECTED COASTAL RESORTS.  
THE COMPARISON OF USTKA AND ŁEBA RESORTS**

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**Abstract**

In the article was taken an issue of the tourist opinion on the tourist activity and perception of two selected middle coastal towns Ustka and Łeba. The results show that both towns were visited by the tourists coming from all parts of Poland. The travels were most often organized independently by car with accommodation in private rooms and boarding houses. The most attractive elements for tourists in both towns were indicated the elements directly linked with their location as sea, dunes, lighthouses, festival and events or pier.

**Key words:** coast, tourist perception, tourist attractiveness, tourist trips

**INTRODUCTION**

The issue of determinants of tourist space perception and tourist activity are often analysed in works of geographers and others researchers (Alejziak 2009, Bartkowski 1986, Bartnicka 1989, Hal and Page 2007, Kowalczyk 2001, Kożuchowski 2005, Liszewski 1995, Wojciechowski 1986). The tourist space is understood as the part of the geographical expanse, visited by the tourists with the elements of the tourist development. The coastal resorts are the main destination place tourists for in the holiday tourism in Poland and in all tourist regions of the world. According to Kurek (2008) about half of all tourist journeys are situated in coastal resorts. The tourism in the coastal localities bases predominantly on the virtues of coastline and sea and it is especially predestinated for 3 s tourism (sea, sun, sand). The coastal environment

is a very strong magnet for tourists and recreationists, although the temperate zone climate on the Baltic shoreline with relatively cold and short summer causes that the tourist and recreation season is rather short in relation to coastal resorts in others parts of the world. Therefore the tourism in the Polish coastline resorts has usually seasonal form and is limited to short term during summer months – since June to August and sometimes to September. The spa resorts where the holiday tourism exists with health resort made the exception. Therefore such towns have facilities to receive the tourists through the whole year. The very important role of tourism in coastal resorts plays its economic function. Very often the holiday tourism is a source of income for the people living in these localities, especially in Polish coastal resorts.

The aim of the research was the identification of specific character of tourism in coastal resorts basing on the tourism in two selected Polish coastal resorts situated in the middle part of the Baltic shore – Ustka and Łeba. In the article the author tried to show the image of the tourist perception of both of towns basing on the questionnaire survey made in the beginning of June 2008. The research was made in the beaches of Ustka and Łeba. In the research took part about 500 tourists from Łeba and about 400 from Ustka. The questionnaire allowed to get the information about structure of tourism, the tourists origin places, their age structure and about their material status and education. In the main part of the questionnaire survey tourists staying in both resorts were asked about their knowledge of the tourist attractions in Ustka and Łeba and for their opinion about the perception image of both towns with their surroundings. Moreover, the tourists were asked about the main – in their opinion – virtues and defects of both localities as the coastal resorts receiving the touristic movement. Basing on the research the author got other information about the tourism such as frequency, ways of transport, tourism such motivations, length of stay, tourists earlier visits in both resorts, forms of spending time during their stays and forms of accommodation which they used during their holidays in Łeba and Ustka.

The questionnaire survey allowed to gather the information about the main social, demographic and economic values of tourists spending time in both resorts. These information let to explain the perception image of both resorts main determinants and their role in the forming of image of main virtues and defects of both localities as the coastal resorts.

Pearce and Kirk (1986) identified three main zones of the coastal environment management. These are: the tourist services zone (mainly the accommodation is provided), the transit zone (dunes) and recreational activity zone (beach and sea). In different parts of the world the structure of the coastal environment differs and in the Polish Baltic coastline we can find 5 characteristic areas – the beach zone, the forest belt, zone of dunes, the promenade and the zone with accommodation and services for tourists.

The tourism in the coastal resorts has its own specificity caused by concentration of tourism movement in holiday months and it has definitely a seasonal character. Besides of the concentration in time the tourism movement in the coastal regions is characterized by the concentration in the beach and seaside promenade.

## SPECIFICITY OF ŁEBA AND USTKA AS THE TOURIST COASTAL RESORTS

Despite of similarities, the coastal resorts have an individual specificity in respect to resources of site, climate, type of coastline and tourist development.

Łeba is more isolated in relation to most of urbanized regions of Poland than Ustka. Furthermore, Łeba has more natural limits for tourist movement in comparison to Ustka.

It is a result of Slovinski National Park surroundings. Łeba is mainly predestinated to holiday tourism, next to different forms of wonder tourism and forms of special tourism. The tourism movement in Łeba is characterised by high level of seasonality. Ustka is rather predestinated to holiday tourism but the seasonality of tourism there is lower in comparison to Łeba. It is result of the health resources as Ustka is one of the coastal spa resorts. Thus the tourism movement in holiday season and after is characterized by smaller quantitative disproportion in comparison to Łeba (Table 1).

Table 1  
The specificity of the conditions of the tourism development in Ustka and Łeba

Łeba	Ustka
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Isolation in relation to the most big Polish urbanized centers</li> <li>■ Natural limits for the tourism movement and tourism development as a result of the Slovinski National Park surroundings</li> <li>■ Smaller and narrower beach compared with Ustka</li> <li>■ The concentration of the tourism movement in the smaller surface of the beach compared with Ustka</li> <li>■ Difficulties in transport availability as a result of the nature limits for transport development and as result of smaller number of transport (bus, train) connections of Łeba with big Polish cities compared with Ustka</li> <li>■ Dominance of the holiday tourism which is accompanied by the ecotourism connected with the natural and antropogenic resources of the Slovinski National Park and its buffor zone</li> <li>■ The tourism movement is definitely seasonal and limits to some summer months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Smaller isolation compared with Łeba in relation to the most big Polish urbanized centers</li> <li>■ No natural limits for the tourism movement and tourism development in the resort</li> <li>■ Greater and wider beach compared with Łeba</li> <li>■ The smaller concentration of the tourism movement in the greater beach in comparison with Łeba</li> <li>■ Much better availability of transport as a result of the surroundings of Słupsk city and much more train and bus connections between Ustka and Słupsk and others cities</li> <li>■ Dominance of the holiday tourism which is mostly accompanied by the spa and wonder tourism in high level compared with Łeba</li> <li>■ Heights of tourism movement seasonality although smaller compared with Łeba as a result of the spa tourism based on the spa resort</li> </ul>

Source: own study

Both the resorts are mainly connected with the passive forms of holiday tourism what is related to the seaside site and coastal climate. In the last years the active forms of tourism has been appearing in the beaches of both localities. It is worth mentioning that the tourism in both towns is mainly on individual tourism.

Both the resorts are situated in the middle of the Polish coastline, Ustka about 17 kilometers from Słupsk, Łeba 30 kilometers from Lębork. Both of them differ in the basic data about the tourism movement and tourist accommodation (Table 2). Łeba

Table 2  
The basic data about accommodation infrastructure and tourist traffic  
in Łeba and Ustka resorts

The basic data about tourism movement and development	Łeba	Ustka
General amount of accommodation objects	75	38
All years round objects	12	20
General amount of accommodation places	9 723	4 936
All year round accommodation places	1 466	2 421
Amount of tourists	98 261	74 287
Amount of foreign tourists	6 307	3 624
Amount of guests rooms	23 225	34 965
Accommodation places rent by foreign tourists	3 122	4 248
Amount of nights spent by tourists	615 340	563 753
Amount of nights spent by foreign tourists	30 894	8 290

Source: own study based on the statistic data of Institute of Tourism

has got much more accommodation objects and places but the most of them are seasonal. The data about the tourist movement show the more tourist come to Łeba, especially taking foreign tourists into consideration. The analysis of the accommodation data in both towns shows that in Ustka there are much more guests rooms than in Łeba.

Generally, we can say in Łeba there are much more objects and accommodation places and there is bigger tourist movement but in Ustka there are much more all year round objects and places and the tourist movement is not so seasonal in comparison to Łeba. It is the result of the tourist stays in spa resort after the holiday season.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE TOURISM MOVEMENT IN ŁEBA AND USTKA AND THE TOURISTIC SPACE PERCEPTION BASING ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY**

The main source of information about the tourists staying in Ustka and Łeba were the questionnaire surveys made in July 2006. About 500 tourists in Ustka and 400 in

Łeba participated in this research. The questionnaire survey contained the questions such as: ways of travel used, accommodation facilities during their stay in both towns, forms of spending free, and how many times they have been in the resort and duration of planned stay.

Moreover, tourists were asked about their opinion on tourist attractions of Ustka/Łeba and surroundings, qualities and flaws of the town in the wide context of the tourist recreational development. The aim of the research was getting tourists opinion and their perception of tourist area of Ustka and Łeba and theirs surroundings.

The analysis of the dominating forms of organizing tourists trips to Ustka and Łeba showed that there are no big differences (Fig. 1). In both groups most of tourists organized their trips independently (65% in Łeba, 55% in Ustka). The next group were the trips organized by the family (about 30% in Łeba, and 25% in Ustka). The role of other organizers was incidental. It shows the Polish tourists rarely use travel organizations in tourists trips within the country.

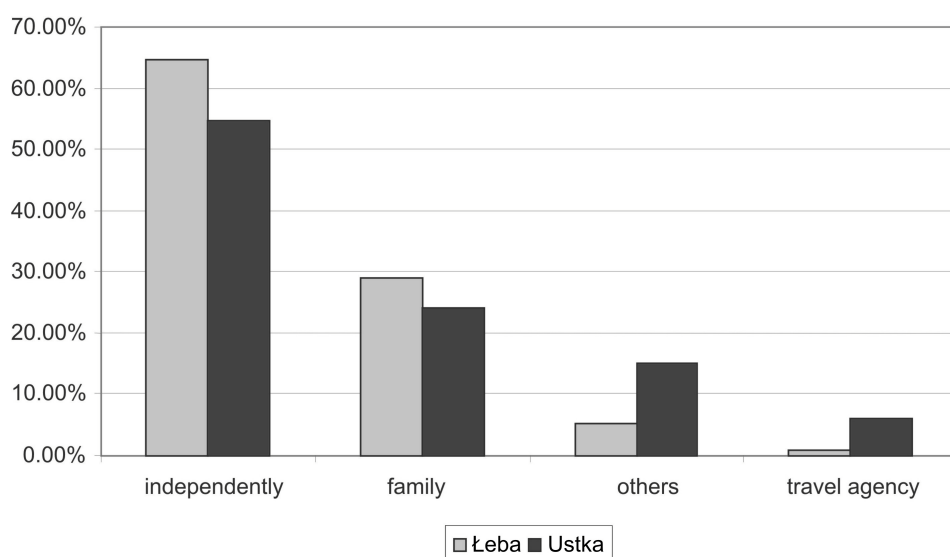


Fig. 1. The main organizers of the tourists stays in Łeba and Ustka basing on the questionnaire surveys

Source: own study based on the results of questionnaire survey

The map of the tourists origin places shows the most of the tourist staying in both towns came from the same provinces of Poland (Fig. 2).

The respondents staying in Łeba come from 222 towns. The most of them came from the Pomorskie province (32%). About 11% came from the Mazowieckie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Wielkopolskie provinces. The least number of tourists came from the east provinces (Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Świętokrzyskie, Podlaskie and Podkarpackie) and from the smallest west provinces: Opolskie and Lubuskie (below 5%). Taking cities into consideration the most of tourists came from Warsaw (17 persons), Łębork (13 persons), Olsztyn (10 persons) and from Poznań (7) Toruń (7) and Bydgoszcz (7).

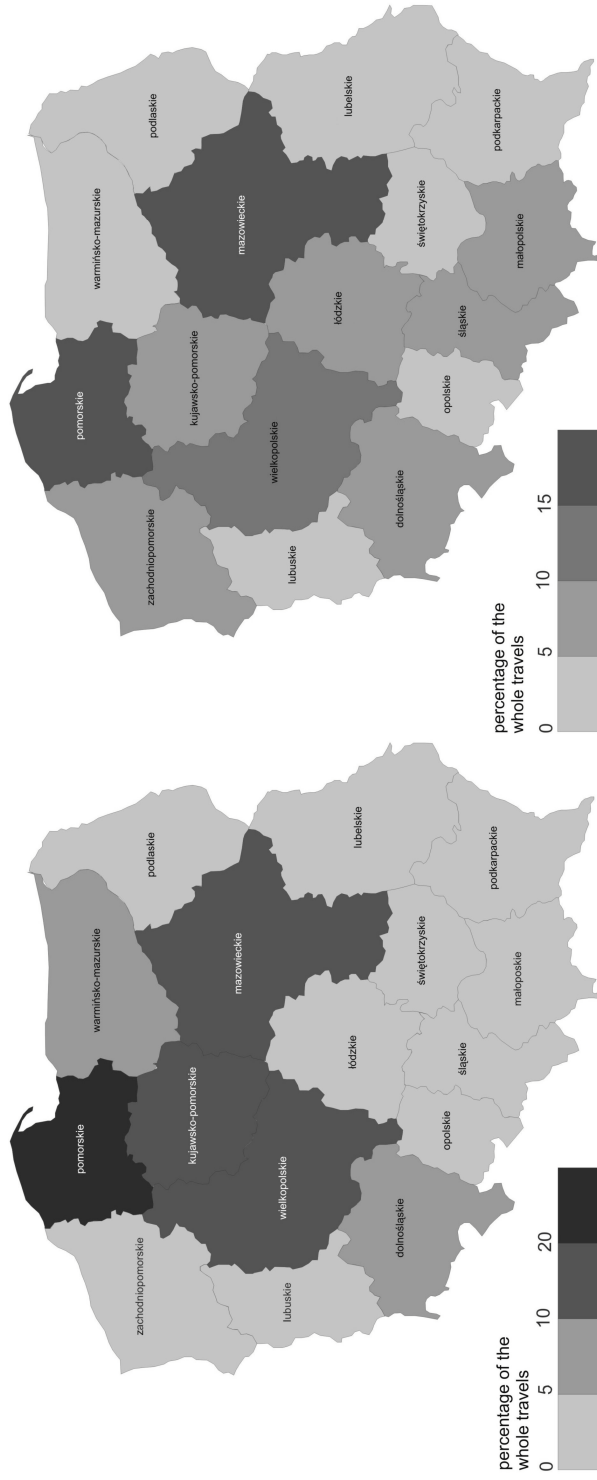


Fig. 2. The origin places of tourists visited Leba and Uska resorts basing on the questionnaire survey  
Source: own study based on the results of questionnaire survey

The tourists-respondents from Ustka came from much lower number of towns – 137. The origin places of tourists staying in Ustka show the similar spatial arrangement. The most of the tourists questioned in the research came from two provinces. The first was the Pomorskie province from where came over 30% of all tourists. About 19% of tourists came from the Mazowieckie province. As it was in the case of Łeba, the lowest number of tourists came from the east, south and north provinces (Podkarpackie, Świętokrzyskie, Lubelskie, Podlaskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie – below 5%) and from the smallest west provinces (Opolskie and Lubuskie).

Taking into consideration the cities from where tourists arrived, we can say the most of them came from Warsaw (51 persons). Other places of tourists origins were Poznań (34), Kraków (16), Wrocław (13), Bydgoszcz (13), Łódź (12), Toruń (12), then Kielce, Częstochowa, Lublin. Over half (50.7%) of questioned tourists in Ustka came from the major Polish cities.

The maps of tourists origin places show the differences and likenesses in the range of the spatial influence of Łeba and Ustka as the tourists resorts (Fig. 2). The main differences show:

- the bigger dispersion of origin places of tourists staying in Łeba in comparison to tourists staying in Ustka (tourists staying in Łeba came from 222 localities and staying in Ustka came from 137 localities),
- dominance of tourists coming from the strongly urbanized provinces and from the biggest towns of Poland,
- high number of tourists from the nearest towns and cities.

We can say the range of the spatial influence of Łeba and Ustka is the function of the dimension of the town from where the tourist came from and spatial distance of these areas and reception's area.

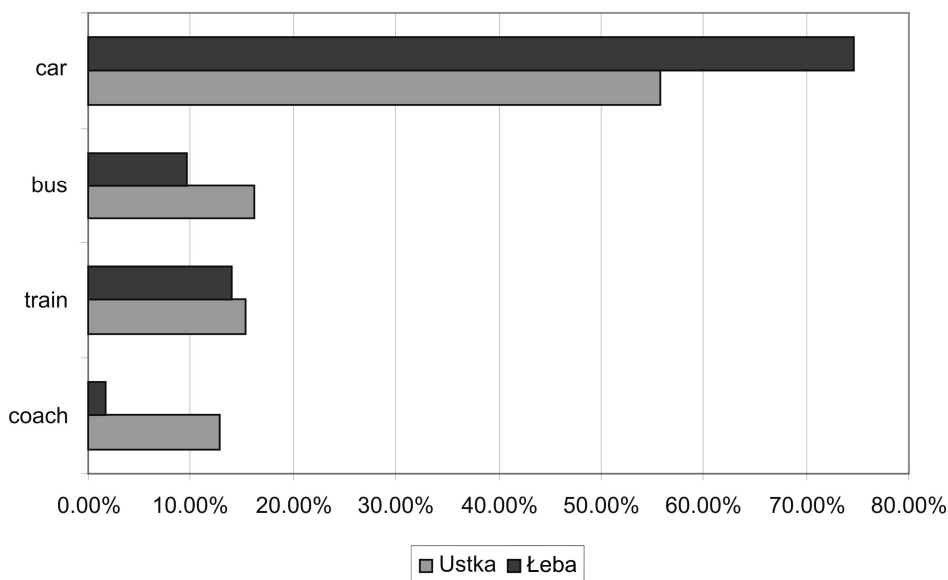


Fig. 3. Ways of transport used by the examined group of tourists in their travel to Ustka and Łeba  
Source: own study based on the results of questionnaire survey

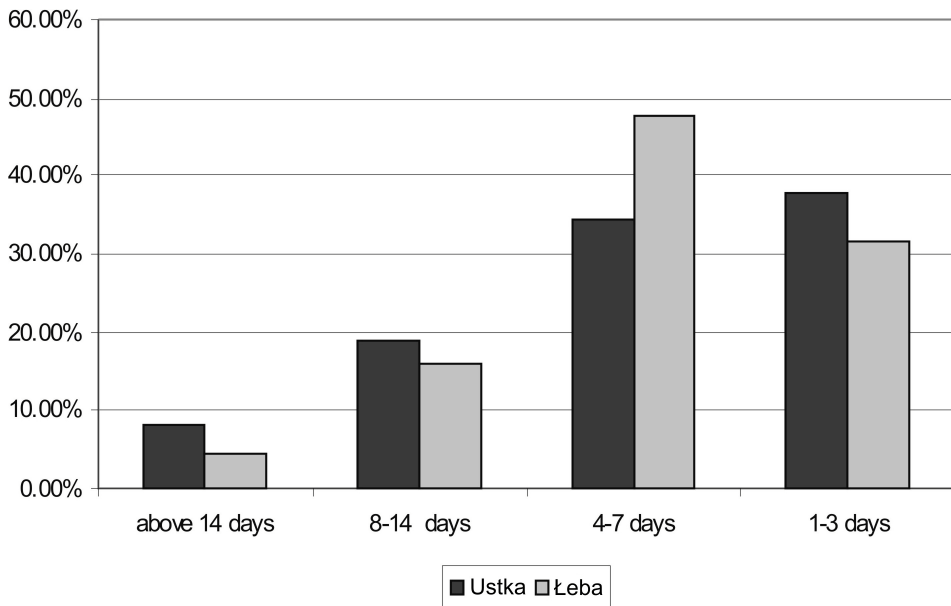


Fig. 4. Tourists length of stay in Łeba and Ustka

Source: own study based on the results of questionnaire survey

The analysis of the main ways of transport used by the examined groups of tourists in their trips to Ustka and Łeba shows the dominance of the car (over 70% in case of tourists arriving to Łeba and nearly 60% in case of tourists arriving to Ustka, Fig. 3). It is a result of the fact that most of tourists arriving to both towns came there individually. Higher number of tourists arriving to Ustka by train and by bus is the result of the much better availability of Ustka in public ways of transport in comparison to Łeba.

Both of localities as a typical coastal resorts are especially predominated for the long term holiday tourism. The tourists resting in Łeba and Ustka were asked about their length of stay in both resorts (Fig 4). The majority of tourist staying in Łeba declared visits for 4 to 7 days (about 50%). Next indicated visit not longer than 3 days (above 30%). The tourists resting in Ustka most often declared visit not longer than 3 days (39%). It was probably an effect of bigger number of tourists from Słupsk and surroundings resting in the resort. A lot of tourists from Słupsk came to Ustka without spending night. Besides it, about 34% declared visits for 4 to 7 days and 19% for 8 to 14 days.

The main element of tourists development of coastal resorts is touristic accommodation. In Polish coastal resorts tourists accommodation has a seasonal character what is caused by short time of tourist season.

The researched groups resting in Ustka and Łeba were asked about their forms of lodging places used during their visit (Fig. 5).

The majority of tourist stay in Ustka slept in guest houses (about 30%), hotel (23%) and private rooms (22%). The analysis of accommodation used by tourists in Łeba shows that the most of them slept in private rooms (50%), in guest houses



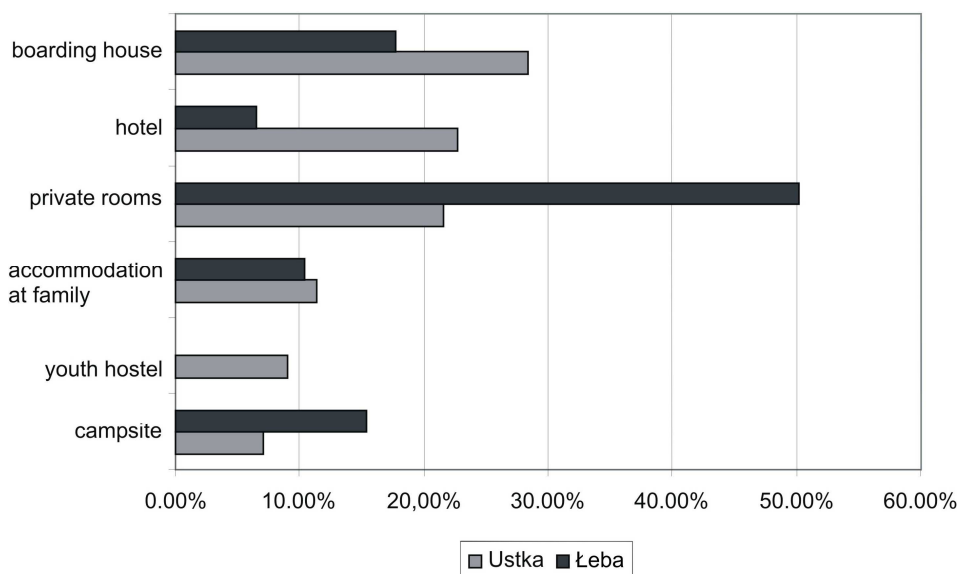


Fig. 5. Main forms of accommodation used by tourists during their stay in Ustka and Łeba  
Source: own study based on the results of questionnaire survey

(about 20%) and on camping (about 15%). Such answers show the small number of legal tourist lodging places in Łeba.

The analysis of spending time forms shows similarity between both the groups of tourists. It is result of similar natural resources of both localities and small distance between them.

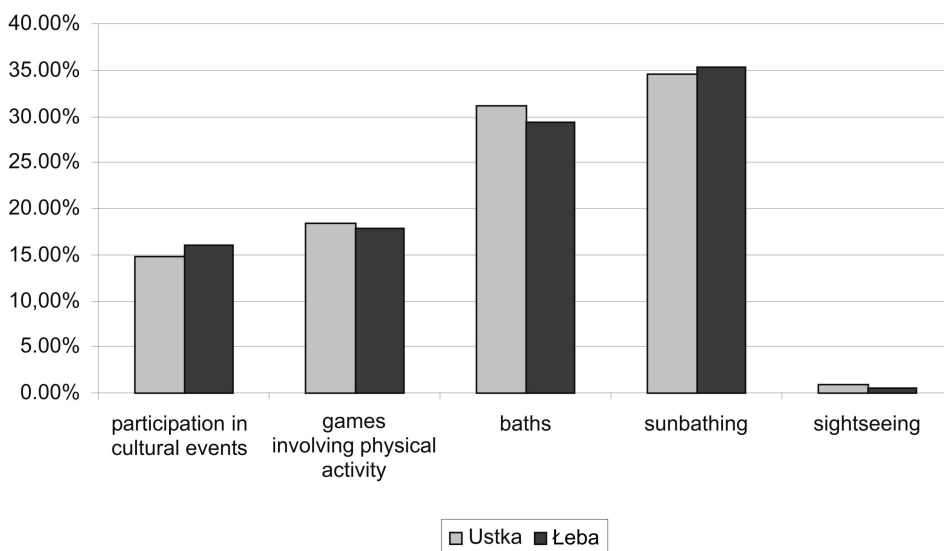


Fig. 6 Main forms of time spending by tourists during their stay in Ustka and Łeba  
Source: own study based on the results of questionnaire survey

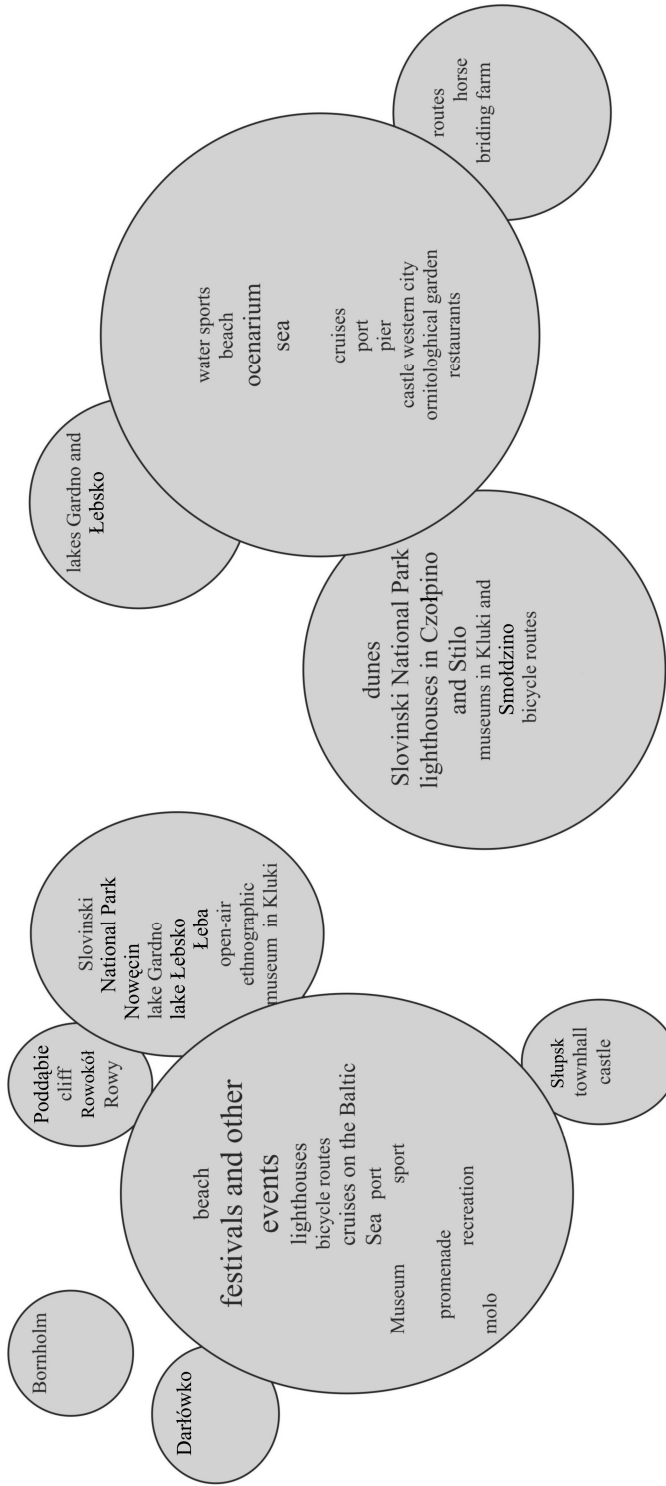


Fig. 7. Perceptual scheme of tourist holiday space of Uszka (A) and Leba (B) and its surroundings on the basis of tourists indications  
Source: own work basis on the questionnaire survey

The tourist attractiveness and dominating forms of spending time in both resorts were dominated by the character of tourist and recreational values (Fig. 6).

The most often tourists indicated sun bathing, bathing in sea (about 30% in both localities). Next they most often indicated sport, recreation in the beach, participation in cultural events on the beach and seaside promenade during the holiday season.

Other forms of spending free time were indicated incidentally. It is difficult to explain why the tourist in both localities did not indicate the journeys to the interesting localities in the surroundings of Ustka and Łeba.

Perception of tourist areas is an interesting issue brought up in the contemporary research of tourism by researchers representing various fields of science. Among them there are geographers, sociologists, psychologists.

According to Koźuchowski (2005), tourist perception is determined by the endo- and egzogenic factors – among them the main role play the socioeconomic and demographic factors such as sex, age, structure of education and social and economical factors. The important role plays the individual experience from adolescence and past.

Both tourists groups visiting Łeba and Ustka indicated over 30 elements of tourist attractiveness of these resorts and their surroundings. In case of Łeba tourists more often indicated the natural elements connected with Slovinski National Park and other nearest localities. They most often named dunes, lakes Łebsko and Gardno, lighthouses in Stilo and Czołpino, sea. Much more rarely they enumerated the elements directly related with Łeba. The main element of an attractiveness of Łeba and its surroundings is their coastal localisation. There is no much more spectacular tourist attractions in Łeba as historic monuments or other tourists objects. Among these objects most often oceanarium, “western city”, pier and port were indicated.

In case of Ustka most often elements directly related with the town itself were named. Among them were festivals and other events in the beach and on the seaside promenade, lighthouse, cruises on the Baltic Sea, beach, pier, promenade. The next were indicated the elements situated in the surroundings, such as Slovinski National Park, Nowęcín, lighthouses in Stilo and Czołpino, historical and cultural heritage of Słupsk, and oceanarium in Darłówko and even Bornholm.

Generally, the tourists space perception in both examined groups was strongly formed by the elements directly connected with the tourist and recreational attractions of the coastline. These elements were most often enumerated by tourists. Next they indicated the attractions situated in the surroundings of both towns, especially the Slovinski National Park, lighthouses, museums in Kluki and Smółdzino. Tourers staying in Łeba in Ustka and similar the tourists space perception.

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DETERMINANTY AKTYWNOŚCI TURYSTYCZNEJ I PERCEPCJI PRZESTRZENI  
TURYSTYCZNEJ NA PRZYKŁADZIE WYBRANYCH KURORTÓW NADMORSKICH.  
STUDIUM PORÓWNAWCZE USTKI I ŁEBY

**Streszczenie**

Najczęściej odwiedzanymi destynacjami turystycznymi zarówno w skali kraju, jak i świata są obszary nadmorskie. Według Kurka ponad 50% wszystkich podróży jest związanych z miejscowościami nadmorskimi. W artykule dokonano porównania aktywności turystycznej wybranej grupy turystów odwiedzających miejscowości nadmorskie środkowego odcinka wybrzeża Bałtyku. Posłużono się w tym celu studium porównawczym osób wypoczywających w Łebie oraz Ustce. Jako materiał źródłowy wykorzystano wyniki anonimowych badań ankietowych, które zostały przeprowadzone w obu miejscowościach w pierwszej dekadzie lipca w latach 2006 i 2007 przez studentów geografii (specjalność turystyka) w trakcie ćwiczeń terenowych. W badaniach wzięło udział około 900 turystów (400 w Łebie oraz 500 w Ustce). Głównym celem badań była analiza aktywności turystycznej w obu miejscowościach na podstawie zasięgu przestrzennego pochodzenia turystów, środków transportu wykorzystywanych w podróży, formy zakwaterowania w trakcie pobytu w obu miejscowościach, planowanej długości pobytu oraz organizatorów przyjazdu. Bardzo istotnym elementem prowadzonych badań było również określenie głównych atrybutów atrakcyjności turystycznej obu badanych miejscowości.