

# Analysis of Decision Factors when Choosing a Summer Camp for Minors (the Case of Romania)

Anca-Raluca TANASA<sup>1,\*</sup>

Saša JOVANOVIĆ<sup>2</sup>

Marius-Iulian DUMITRU<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi, Romania; [anca.tanasa@uaic.ro](mailto:anca.tanasa@uaic.ro)

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, University of Banja Luka, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina; [sasa.jovanovic@ffvs.unibl.org](mailto:sasa.jovanovic@ffvs.unibl.org)

<sup>3</sup> Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi, Romania; [imdumitru@yahoo.com](mailto:imdumitru@yahoo.com)

\* corresponding author: [anca.tanasa@uaic.ro](mailto:anca.tanasa@uaic.ro)

**Abstract:** *The first objective of the investigation was to design a valid and reliable tool in order to identify the best practices concerning a program for children and adolescents. Secondly, we wanted to assess the construct validity of the scale and the correlation between the reactions of the questionnaire respondents and specific variables of decision factors and to provide the specialists in the field with such a measurement tool based on the presence of these factors. Thirdly, we aimed to identify the decision factors when choosing a camp for minors in Romania (e.g., Richmond et al., 2019; Richmond et al., 2023). Materials and method: The research study involved 139 parents/guardians whose child/children was/were enrolled in a summer camp program. In order to assess the internal consistency of the proposed questionnaire items, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of validity was applied. To understand the reactions of those who filled out the close-ended questionnaire, we used exploratory factor analysis, extraction method, principal component analysis, and rotation method (i.e., Oblim with Kaiser Normalisation). SPSS version 20 was used to conduct the statistical analysis of the data. Results: The 17-item scale demonstrated an Alpha coefficient of validity of 0.61, indicating a good level of reliability and supporting the validity and consistency of this version of the scale. Principal component factor analysis grouped the variables into six distinct factors. Moreover, the factor analysis revealed various barriers perceived by parents or guardians when deciding whether to enrol their child in such a program.*

**Keywords:** *summer camps, teenagers, good practices, decision factors, attitudes and behaviours, barriers.*

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## Introduction

In 2022, one in eight people globally experienced obesity. Since 1990, teenage obesity has increased fourfold, while adult obesity has more than doubled worldwide. That year, 2.5 billion individuals aged 18 and older were classified as overweight, including 890 million who were obese. Among adults over 18, 16% lived with obesity, and 43% were overweight. Additionally, 37 million children under five were overweight. Among those aged 5 to 19, over 390 million were overweight, including 160 million with obesity (World Health Organisation, 2022a).

In Romania, approximately 10% of females aged 7-9 are obese, while about 28.5% of children aged 7-9 are in danger of being overweight, including obese. About 31.51% of boys are at risk for being overweight, which includes being obese, and 10% are obese (World Health Organisation, 2022b).

Participation in youth sports is crucial for encouraging children to be physically active and could be a means of preventing childhood obesity. Understanding how various facets of sports involvement affect physical activity is essential for creating physical activity interventions that work.

The rate of nonparticipation in sports remains high despite the variety of activities available for children. Compared to 30 years ago, children today are 40% less active, and their energy expenditure is 400% lower than peers from 40 years ago. Modern kids and teens live predominantly inactive lifestyles, often spending their free time on sedentary activities like watching TV or playing video games. On average, those aged 2 to 18 spend more than five hours a day on these activities.

Physical inactivity in childhood poses serious health risks. Many chronic adult diseases have their roots in childhood, and a lack of activity significantly increases the risk of health issues. About 40% of children aged 5 to 8 already show risk factors for heart disease, including obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. These conditions are often irreversible because children maintain sedentary habits over time.

Inactivity is also closely linked to other unhealthy behaviours. Sedentary children tend to consume less nutritious food, eat more fat, and are more likely to smoke, all of which heighten the risk of cardiovascular disease in teenagers (Mavrovouniotis, 2012).

Participation in youth sports (Adetunji & Akindutire, 2017) is crucial for encouraging children to be physically active and could be a means to prevent childhood obesity. Being physically active can benefit people of all ages by promoting physical fitness, wellness, and healthier lifestyles.

Understanding how sports participation affects physical activity is essential for creating effective physical activity interventions (Lee et al., 2018).

### **Scops and objectives of the current study**

The investigation had three main objectives. The first was to create a valid and reliable tool for identifying best practices in programs for children and adolescents. The second was to evaluate the scale's construct validity and examine how respondents' questionnaire reactions related to specific decision-making variables. This also aimed to provide specialists with a measurement tool grounded in these factors. Lastly, the study sought to identify key decision factors for choosing a camp for minors in Romania. These factors included the development of active life behaviours, parental barriers to decision-making, preferred activity types, parental interests in summer camp selection, children's interests, behavioural attitudes and traits, and psychobehavioural education (e.g., Richmond et al., 2019; Richmond et al., 2023).

### **Literature review**

Research has shown that participation in sports, particularly outdoor sports, plays a vital role in fostering healthy behaviours in children. It also uniquely contributes to family dynamics, community building among fellow hikers, spiritual growth, and a deeper appreciation for nature. The camping experience has also been highlighted as a structured opportunity for immersive leisure activities.

Summer camps are regarded as one of the most important organised leisure activities for children and teenagers, gaining popularity every year.

Studies also indicate that regular physical activity has significant positive health benefits. Those who engage in it are less likely to develop chronic conditions such as coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, anxiety, depression, and obesity. Establishing a physically active lifestyle early can significantly lower the risk of health problems during childhood and later in life (Haegele & Lieberman, 2014; Haegele, 2015; Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2011).

Since human factors are responsible for approximately 90% (especially parents) (Kromerova, 2017) of these obesity cases (Mavrovouniotis, 2012) due to spending inactive leisure time, studying this research can help parents/guardians/children to develop effective health safety interventions.

However, the role of these activities, the analysis of decision factors in choosing a camp for minors in Romania, and perceptions of the models of good educational practices offered by summer camp programs have not been explored in depth. Therefore, this research study was designed to assess the construct validity of the scale and the relationship between respondents' reactions and specific decision factor variables.

### ***The concept of summer camp activities and their impact on minors (the case of Romania)***

Summer camps for children and teenagers have a rich history. During the Industrial Revolution, they provided recreation and an escape from urban life. Over time, summer camp programs began incorporating educational and counselling techniques to foster participants' healthy development (Omelan et al., 2018; Case, 2012).

This concept has since been applied across various fields, including sports (Monk & Deutsch, 2016), music, languages such as English, German, and French (Stanat et al., 2005; Wilson & Sibthorp, 2018), communication and media (DeHudy et al., 2021), storytelling (Lynch et al., 2018), and human resources.

Over the past two decades, camp research has gained visibility, focusing on two primary areas: outcomes and operations (Henderson et al., 2007). Outcome research highlights improvements in positive identity, social skills, physical and cognitive abilities, and values, including spirituality. Despite this, general day and residential camps have often been underutilised as settings for fostering positive youth development (Bialeschki et al., 2007).

Special attention has been given to the impact of sports camps for children and youth with vision impairments (VI). For example, Ponchillia et al. (2005), as part of the National Sports Education Camps (NSEC) project, carried out an investigation. They found that participants with VI in a one-week residential sports education camp demonstrated enhanced physical skills, more positive attitudes, increased sports knowledge, and a greater likelihood of participating in local sports activities (Furtado et al., 2017).

In Romania, the analysis of decision-makers in the choice of camps for minors has started to be treated as a distinct construct. Consequently, several specific scales were created. In addition, researchers began to argue for their importance (Richmond et al., 2023).

### ***The stages of the decision-making process***

Based on the report identifying barriers to participation in outdoor recreation (Scott & Kim, 1998), 26 years later, Wycoff et al. (2024),

developed an online measurement tool (scale) to identify the barriers parents face when trying to enrol their children in a summer camp and to determine the most promising negotiation strategies to overcome these constraints. They include social identity, fear of getting sick or contracting infectious diseases, poor supervision of children, inadequate access to medical care, and subsequently earning income by working.

A study surveyed 354 families across different income levels (higher, moderate, and lower) to explore parental priorities in sending children to summer camp. It examined the roles family members play in the decision-making process and how these factors vary by income and family context. The survey collected data on parents' developmental goals for their children, the fit between the camp and the child or family, and the extent of family involvement in decision-making.

The study identified three main reasons parents send their children to camp: enjoyment and belonging, intrapersonal growth, and interactive learning. Parents assessed camp fit based on five key factors: cost and logistics, program quality, child fit, institutional connections, and social networks. In most cases, one parent—often the mother—made the final decision to enrol the child.

Income played a significant role in shaping priorities. Lower-income parents expressed more developmental goals for their children compared to higher-income parents. Similarly, income influenced how parents evaluated camp fit. Lower-income families prioritized institutional connections and cost/logistics, while higher-income families focused more on social connections.

The study concluded that parents strive to provide the best opportunities for their children, regardless of financial circumstances. They value camps that offer enjoyment, opportunities to interact with others, independence, and intrapersonal skill development. However, parental choices about camp location and fit are influenced by a range of factors. Cost and logistics are especially important for low-income families, highlighting the need for camps to reduce barriers to participation through outreach and scholarship programs (Richmond et al., 2023).

### ***The decision factors defining various forms of reflection when choosing a summer camp***

Previous studies on factors influencing camp selection have found a positive correlation with parents' personalities and lifestyles. These studies identified four key aspects parents consider when choosing a school holiday camp: activity features, organisers, safety and risk, and activity facilities.

Interestingly, most parents are more accepting of moderate to high risks, such as swelling, fractures, drowning, and getting lost, than common hazards like mosquito bites, sunburn, exhaustion, and minor cuts (Muhammad et al., 2024).

Research also highlights a strong negative relationship between self-concept and permissive mothers, as well as between self-concept and authoritarian parenting from both mothers and fathers. Conversely, a significant positive correlation exists between the authoritarian parenting styles of fathers and mothers. Gender plays a moderating role in the relationships between procrastination, hypervigilance, and authoritarian parenting styles. Similarly, the connection between self-concept and authoritarian parenting is also influenced by gender.

Overall, these findings emphasise the importance of parenting styles—particularly authoritarian approaches—in shaping teenagers' decision-making abilities and fostering a strong self-concept (Jabeen et al., 2024; Buri, 1991; Mann et al., 1989; Robson, 1998).

## Methodology

### *Aim of the current study*

This study explores parents' opinions regarding summer camp programs. The aim is to gather information to identify the alignment between the needs expressed by parents and the summer camp offerings, highlighting best practices for such programs designed for children and adolescents. To this end, the study focuses on designing and validating a questionnaire to assess the internal consistency of the items for use with the Romanian population. It also seeks to standardise a list of requirements and develop a 17-item guide for researchers studying best practices in programs for children and adolescents. Additionally, it aims to assist decision-makers in selecting camps for minors in Romania. Several factors underline the importance of this objective

*Firstly*, previous studies have shown that when parents choose a summer camp for their children, they do so based on five key considerations (i.e., cost and logistics, program quality, kid fit, social connections, and institutional relationships) (Richmond et al., 2023). *Secondly*, family income significantly predicts all developmental goals, with parents from wealthier households reporting fewer developmental goals than those from poorer families. High-income parents placed less emphasis on institutional relationships and logistics/cost than low-income parents. However, parents in the high-income group showed more significant consideration for social

connections (Richmond et al., 2023). *Thirdly*, the basis for choosing to send their children to a *Summer Camp* program includes the development of active life behaviours, perceived parental barriers to decision-making, and preferred types of activities. It also comprises parents' interests in choosing a summer camp program, children's interests and attitudes, and behavioural traits and psychobehavioural education are the basis for choosing to send their children to a *Summer Camp* program (Richmond et al., 2019; Richmond et al., 2023).

Our *hypothesis* is that the construction and validation of such a questionnaire would identify the barriers parents perceive in decision-making, the types of preferred activities, and best practices in a program for children and adolescents. It would provide a valuable guide for researchers conducting studies in this field and for the organisers of such programs.

## **Current study - Participants, methods, and instruments**

### ***Participants and sampling***

We created a sampling plan based on gender, age, country, and background to identify several parents/guardians. The inclusion criteria for respondents were as follows: parents with minor children under their care; parents whose minor child/children were enrolled in at least one summer camp program; country of residence (Romania); background (rural and urban); gender (female or male). We contacted potential participants, informed them about the aim of the investigation and asked for their consent to participate. From the initial sample of 326 parents/guardians, 139 participants filled out the questionnaire. Participants had their child/children enrolled in at least one summer camp-type program. The participants' children were aged from 7 to 18, and the background of the study participants was urban and rural.

The research was conducted online between August and September, 2024, using the survey, data collection and research tool, *Google Forms*.

### ***Measures (instruments)***

The scale included a total of 17 items with close-ended questions and the same number of answers. It included questions measuring *attitudes*, *interests*, and perceived *barriers* to parents choosing a *Summer Camp* Program. We included factors such as '*price*' (i.e., the camp is selected according to price); '*interests*' (i.e., the camp is chosen according to interests); '*sports activities*' (i.e., the camp chosen involves mainly sports activities). We also included '*motor skills*' (i.e., whether positive influences have been observed in children enrolled in such a program in terms of the development of specific

motor skills); ‘SEN’ (i.e., whether the participation of children with SEN (special educational needs in the camp is a barrier for the parents); ‘age’ (i.e., the age of the child is an impediment when they want to opt to send him/her to a camp). Finally, we added ‘fear, dread’ (i.e., whether the parents felt fear of accidents and injuries), “psychobehavioural education” (i.e., exposure of the child to the rules of organisation and conduct of a camp, can be milestones in the subsequent shaping/development of positive behavioural traits); “active behaviour” (i.e., whether participation in a camp with a significant and diversified program of sports activities, can influence an active life behaviour), “passions” (i.e., whether the child’s exposure to a diverse program of activities and workshops can positively impact the development of future passions).

To assess the internal consistency of the items within our questionnaire, *Cronbach’s Alpha* coefficient of validity was applied. We used exploratory factor analysis, extraction method, principal component analysis, and rotation method (i.e., Oblim with Kaiser Normalisation) to understand the reaction patterns of the respondents who filled out the close-ended questionnaire.

*SPSS version 20* was used for statistical analysis of the data.

### ***Procedure***

After contacting potential participants and informing them about the purpose and objectives of the study and the confidentiality of their answers, we asked for their consent to use the data. Each participant gave their written consent when they chose to start filling out the questionnaire. It took an average of 20 minutes to fill out the questionnaire.

### ***Data analysis***

In this study, we conducted an analysis to identify the decision-making factors in choosing a summer camp and to highlight and describe: (1) the interests of children and parents in selecting a summer camp; the types of activities preferred by children (in case of Romania), and (2) the barriers perceived by parents in relation to the decision-making factors.

## **Research results**

### ***Item validity analysis - Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of validity***

We utilised Cronbach’s Alpha validity coefficient to evaluate the internal consistency of the questionnaire items, ensuring they collectively measure the same concept.

Table 1. Case Processing Summary for Decision scale in choosing a summer camp in Romania

		N	%
Cases	Valid	139	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	139	100.0

*Source: Our processing in SPSS*

Table 2. Reliability Statistics for Decision scale in choosing a summer camp in Romania

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,612	17

*Source: Our processing in SPSS*

Table 3. Item-Total Statistics for Decision scale in choosing a summer camp in Romania

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
<b>ITEM 1:</b> Do you find participating in a Summer Camp program helpful in your child's life?	56.79	42.746	.101	.612
<b>ITEM 2:</b> Choose the camp according to your children's interests.	57.12	41.036	.174	.604
<b>ITEM 3:</b> Do you choose the camp according to your interests?	58.77	37.207	.226	.599
<b>ITEM 4:</b> Do you choose your camp based on price?	58.80	37.582	.281	.588
<b>ITEM 5:</b> Do you prefer camps that involve mostly sports activities?	57.50	39.991	.246	.596

<b>ITEM 6:</b> Have you noticed positive influences on your child's development of certain motor skills?	57.40	39.444	.200	.601
<b>ITEM 7:</b> Would you consider a family camp with you and your child/children?	58.17	36.748	.252	.594
<b>ITEM 8:</b> Do you have a problem with children with special educational needs (SEN) / special needs attending the camp?	59.42	36.681	.228	.600
<b>ITEM 9:</b> Is your child's age an impediment when considering sending them to camp?	59.96	38.418	.215	.599
<b>ITEM 10:</b> When you opted to send your child to camp, did you experience feelings such as fear or dread?	59.60	35.589	.380	.568
<b>ITEM 11:</b> Have you been afraid of accidents and injuries?	59.47	36.294	.325	.579
<b>ITEM 12:</b> Can participation in a camp be considered an opportunity for the child's psychoemotional maturation/education?	56.91	41.195	.278	.599
<b>ITEM 13:</b> Can the child's exposure to the rules of organisation and conduct of a camp constitute milestones in the modelling / further development of positive behavioural traits?	56.91	41.317	.274	.600

<b>ITEM 14:</b> Can participation in a camp with a significant and diversified sports activities program influence active lifestyle behaviour?	57.06	41.264	.134	.608
<b>ITEM 15:</b> Can exposure to a diverse program of activities and workshops positively influence the development of future hobbies?	57.04	39.832	.339	.589
<b>ITEM 16:</b> You prefer a camp with mostly non-active / non-sporting activities (sightseeing and activities such as craft workshops, drawing, languages, robotics, math, chess, psychotherapy, etc.) in favour of dynamic/sports activities (swimming, bike tours, fitness, hiking, teambuilding, sports games, etc.).	59.83	39.980	.101	.619
<b>ITEM 17:</b> Do you think that the price of a camp justifies the benefits of participating in such a program?	57.33	38.339	.295	.587

Source: Our processing in SPSS

The number of cases on which the analysis is based, which is 139, is illustrated in the first table. The alpha coefficient of validity of the 17 items is shown in the second table and is *0.61*. The Alpha Coefficient of validity of the 17-item scale has a value of *0.61*, which shows that the scale has a good level of fidelity. An Alpha coefficient with a value greater than or equal to *0.61* is considered satisfactory.

***Exploratory factor analysis***

We used factor analysis to understand the reactions of those who filled out the close-ended questionnaire. The results are presented in Tables 4 and 5 and Figure 1.

Table 4. Pattern Matrix<sup>a</sup> for Decision scale in choosing a summer camp in Romania

	<b>Factor</b>					
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ITEM 15</b>	.863					
<b>ITEM 14</b>	.672					
<b>ITEM 17</b>	.595					
<b>ITEM 7</b>						
<b>ITEM 10</b>		.892				
<b>ITEM 11</b>		.852				
<b>ITEM 9</b>			.740			
<b>ITEM 16</b>			.482			
<b>ITEM 4</b>				.749		
<b>ITEM 3</b>				.446		
<b>ITEM 8</b>				.355		
<b>ITEM 2</b>					-.672	
<b>ITEM 5</b>	.317				.331	
<b>ITEM 13</b>						-.837
<b>ITEM 1</b>						-.553
<b>ITEM 12</b>						-.352
<b>ITEM 6</b>						

*Source: Our processing in SPSS*

Table 5. Component Transformation Matrix for Decision scale in choosing a summer camp in Romania

Component	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	.784	-.197	.490	-.081	-.234	.210
2	.286	.714	.046	.525	.351	.087
3	-.247	-.339	.392	.031	.679	.458
4	.017	-.506	.041	.768	-.043	-.389
5	.325	-.069	-.049	-.352	.573	-.660
6	-.370	.276	.774	-.059	-.178	-.390

Source: Our processing in SPSS

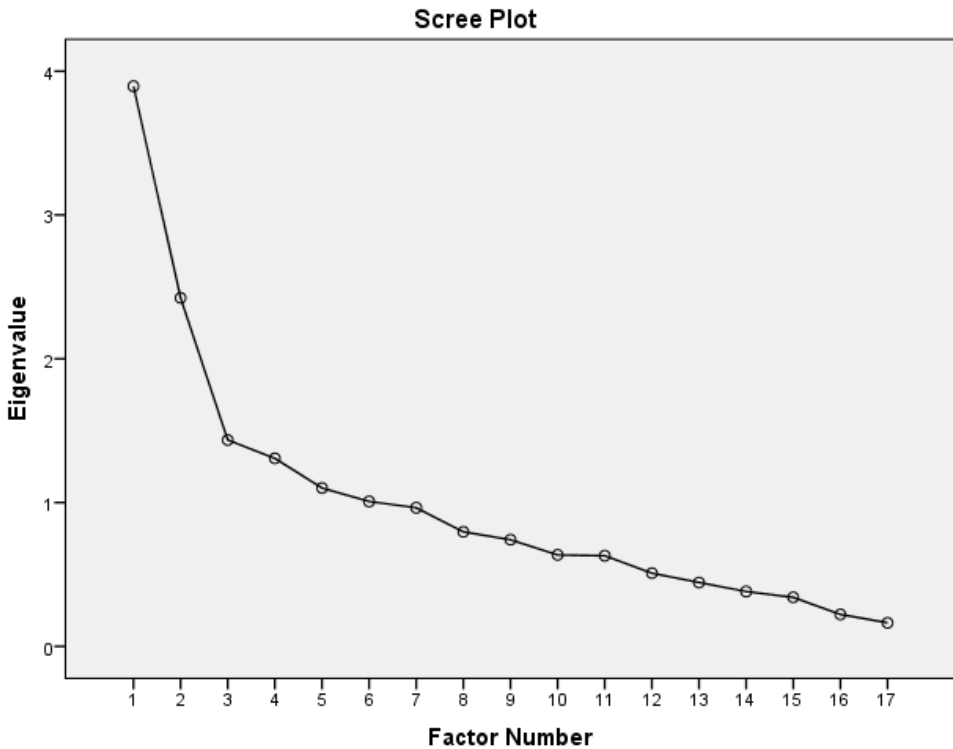


Fig. 1 Diagram Scree Plot for Decision scale in choosing a summer camp in Romania

Source: Our processing in SPSS

As for the factor analysis, which was assessed by principal components, the variables were grouped into six factors. The *first factor* focused on evaluating attitudes involving the development of active *life behaviour*, covering a share of 20.625%. The *second factor* concerned the evaluation of barriers perceived by parents, with a weight of 12.053%. The *third factor* targeted the assessment of *preferred types of activities* (active/non-sporting), with a weight of 0.947%. *Factor 4* evaluates parents' *interests in choosing* such a program, with a weight of 0.773%. *Factor 5* evaluates *children's interests* from the parental point of view, with a weight of 0.636%, and the *6th factor* has a weight of 0.491%, aiming to evaluate *behavioural traits*, attitudes and psychobehavioural education.

### Research limitations

Some *limitations* of this study should be noted. First of all, we used contingency samples in our study. Therefore, the results might not be generalisable for parents from other countries. In this regard, further studies are necessary, or the continuation of this study applied to the specific contexts of those countries, or even a centralisation at the European level.

We believe that further studies are necessary to increase the external validity of these results. We aimed to obtain representative samples, including parents, who varied as much as possible in gender, age, professional status, and background. In future studies, we also aim to include parents' various biases and superstitions when deciding to send their children to summer camp.

We also mention that our research study focuses on parents with minor children who have participated in a summer camp program with a specific geographical context in mind (the Romanian context). This context limits the applicability of the results to other geographical locations or age categories. Parents of children from other countries or involved in different types of programs (e.g., winter camps or similar programs) may face other decision-making challenges in choosing a summer camp than those identified in this study.

The present study focused on analysing the decision-making factors in choosing a summer camp for minors (in the Romanian context), intently excluding external factors that could influence decisions, such as previous experiences with these types of programs, the emotional and psychological state of children, or other issues that might affect participation in such a program.

It is significant to note that answers provided by participants and obtained by applying the questionnaire may involve various subjective attitudes on their part.

## Discussions

Regarding consent to be involved in the study, participants were contacted, informed about the scope of the study, and gave their informed consent for participation. They were also informed about the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time without any consequences to their status.

As for the novelty of the study and its contribution to specialists in the field, we assert that our article provides a significant, new, and valuable contribution to a better insight into the challenges faced by parents in Romania, both nationally and internationally, when choosing a summer camp. It focuses on aspects such as the effective management of minors' leisure time, the positive influences on children enrolled in such programs, and the complexity of barriers perceived by parents and children.

These challenges, often minimised in specialised research, constitute significant obstacles regarding decision-making factors in choosing a summer camp for minors. Highlighting them brings to the forefront a critical perspective necessary to adapt such educational programs to children's real needs.

Our findings indicate that the *Decision scale for choosing a summer camp in Romania* has a good level of fidelity, revealing a satisfactory coefficient.

The decision scale in choosing a summer camp in Romania is comparable to the version in Richmond, 2022, revealing some of the factors in our study.

As expected, the variables were grouped into six factors. The factor "Perceived Parental Barriers" in our study is consistent with findings from two previous studies of US participants (Wycoff et al., 2024; Richmond et al., 2023) who were asked about the barriers they face when trying to enrol their children in a summer camp: 2,88% of parents responded that their *child's age* was a barrier when choosing to send their child to camp; 98,28% reported that it bothered them to have *SEN* (special education needs)/special needs children attend camp; 0,72% experienced feelings such as *fear, dread*; 0,72% experienced fear of *accidents and injuries*. Surprisingly, no people have faced barriers when trying to send their child to camp. These preliminary results suggest that most parents in Romania face at least two or more barriers when making a decision.

Our results reported a greater propensity to choose camp based on monthly income, while another proportion chose camp based on children's interests. In Richmond's study, 2022, compared to parents in the low-income group, parents in the high-income group expressed less care for institutional relationships and logistics/cost. Social ties were given more thought by parents in the higher-income group. Regarding the decision factor to send the child to camp, in a study by Richmond et al., 2023, the decision to send a child to camp is made by one parent, usually the mother.

Studies focusing on the barriers parents face when trying to enrol their children in *Summer camps* should further evaluate this scale's preliminary validity.

Our results also showed that parents send their children to a *Summer Camp* when they are 7. These results can be explained by the fact that as their children grow older and more experienced, some of the barriers they face are mitigated, making parents more confident in their children.

These issues should be taken into account in future studies in order to understand the factors actually shaping the relationship between the barriers faced by parents and the age or experience of the child when parents decide to choose a camp.

Since the present preliminary study demonstrates that the scale has a good level of fidelity, a second experimental study will be conducted to examine external validity by investigating the relationships between perceived parental barriers and their choice of a summer camp activity.

Therefore, we consider that this research study can positively impact the field, both nationally and internationally. By emphasising the importance of the role played by the activities included in summer camp programs for minors, analysing the decision-making factors in choosing a camp for minors in Romania, and highlighting perceptions of best practice models offered by summer camp programs—an area not profoundly explored in the field—the authors make a significant contribution to the field and to specialists involved in such activities.

Additionally, this research study, designed to evaluate the construct validity of a scale and the relationship between respondents' reactions and the specific variables of decision-making factors, underscores the authors' contribution to improving the field.

## Summary and conclusion

This investigation included a study with three primary objectives: *The first objective* of the investigation was to design a valid and reliable tool to identify best practices in a program for children and adolescents. *Secondly*, we wanted, at the same time, to assess the construct validity of the scale and the correlation

between the reactions of the questionnaire respondents and specific variables of decision factors and to provide the specialists in the field with such a measurement tool based on the presence of these factors. *Thirdly*, we aimed to identify the decision factors in choosing a camp for minors in Romania (development of active life behaviour, perceived parental barriers in decision-making, preferred types of activities, parental interests in selecting a summer camp program, children's interests and behavioural attitudes and traits, and psychobehavioural education). Our hypothesis has been validated.

Based on the preliminary study, we can state that the decision scale in choosing a summer camp in Romania records a good level of fidelity, revealing a satisfactory coefficient and good to excellent reliabilities, as well as a satisfactory solution validated by factor analysis. Furthermore, based on the factor analysis grouped into six factors, we identified various barriers perceived by parents/guardians when applying to include their child in such a program. The findings are discussed from the perspective of children's involvement in *Summer Camp* Programs and the decision factors involved in choosing such a program.

By revising and expanding the original content, we developed a decision scale for choosing a *Summer Camp* in Romania, which corresponds to the general factors leading to a tool in this respect (active life behaviour, perceived parental barriers, preferred activities, parents and children's interests in choosing such a program, behavioural traits and psychobehavioural education). In addition, the *Decision Scale in Choosing a Summer Camp in Romania* includes a short and effective subscale aiming to overcome some of the response limits.

The study's primary findings supported the construct validity of our instrument.

In addition, our findings may provide guidance on perceived good educational practice models offered by *Summer Camp* Programs to reduce the risk of obesity among children.

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### **Author contributions**

Authors 1, 2, and 3 contributed to the research design and implementation, the results analysis, and the drafting of the manuscript. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

All authors have equal contributions.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport at “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi approved the study, which was conducted in compliance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Through their legal representatives, informed consent was acquired from each participant engaged in the research.

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