



Who influences family tourism decisions? Incorporating children's perceptions

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Abstract

This article continues the work of Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019) in which they question the appropriateness of relying on a single partner, male or female, to identify the decision-maker in tourism decisions. That study concluded that there is no general consensus among the members of the couple. As a solution, they proposed including the child as an impartial observer. This research tests that suggestion and shows that children's perceptions differ from those of their parents, considering tourism decisions mostly autonomous and mainly dominated by the mother, contrary to parents' perceptions of joint decision making. The practical implications of this finding are discussed.

Keywords Consensus · Children's perception · Perceived influence · Family decision making · Vacations · Couple roles

1 Introduction

Although the concept of family vacations does not always include tourism service providers, it normally includes a set of basic products provided by many vendors (Kim et al. 2007). That is, the decisions associated with family vacations involve a series of stages and subdecisions, such as choosing the destination, which sources to use for information or choosing accommodations. Understanding which members of a family exert the most influence in these decisions is critical when designing marketing strategies, and affects aspects such as channel, message and storytelling.

It should also be pointed out that the children have a growing importance in making tourist decisions (Curtale 2018; Rojas-de-Gracia and Alarcón-Urbistondo 2020; Chiang et al. 2022; Su et al. 2023; Jia et al. 2024). That said, studies support the

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idea that parents are the main drivers in making decisions and have the final word (Kozak and Karadag 2012), although they are highly impacted by the wellbeing of their children (Rojas-de-Gracia and Alarcón-Urbistondo 2020). For this reason, most studies that seek to identify the family members who are most influential in making decisions about family vacations have focused on the parents.

On the basis of this premise, it is assumed that the difference in power is conditioned by the gender of the members of the couple. Thus, using classical terminology, three types of decisions can be distinguished: husband-dominant, wife-dominant or joint if both exert similar influence (Davis and Rigaux 1974). If the first two are grouped together, a distinction is made between autonomous decisions, dominated by one of the members, and joint decisions.

A widely accepting holding in the literature is that, in general, tourist decisions are jointly made by the members of a couple (Rojas-de-Gracia and Alarcón-Urbistondo 2016; Liu et al. 2024). Nevertheless, in the recent cross-cultural study conducted by Cheng et al. (2019), parental influence on family decisions related to vacations in 25 countries in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe was analyzed. The results of this study indicate that across all subdecisions as well as in all societies analyzed, there is a trend toward an autonomous style of parental decision-making, with the exception of Turkey. The authors explain that this reflects a general trend toward a sharing of roles in the couple leading to individual decision making. These results challenge the established conclusions of decades of research in this field. This lack of agreement highlights the need for further research in this area.

On the other hand, the methodology employed in numerous studies in this area has been questioned because it is limited to obtaining a single response per couple, assuming that both members are in sufficient agreement. Davis was the first to cast doubt on this in 1970, pointing out that, in trying to identify the partner who exerts the greatest influence on decision making, relying on the response of a single partner could raise methodological problems and affect the reliability and validity of the data. Indeed, several subsequent investigations have supported the concerns raised by Davis (1970), who concluded that when multiple responses are obtained per household, they do not always match (Godwin and Scanzoni 1989; Julien et al. 1992; Lee and Beatty 2002; Gram 2007; Seebauer et al. 2017). In fact, although several decades after Davis' study, Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019) empirically highlighted this lack of consensus, many studies have continued to collect a single response per household (Pan et al. 2020; Koval and Hansen 2021; Ma and Li 2023).

In light of this, advances in identifying the roles in decision making around family vacations will require first investigating an important element: discovering the degree of convergence among perceptions held by different family members. This is fundamental, as there are few studies on this topic and clear conclusions remain lacking. The few studies that have addressed the topic have mostly focused on comparing results from members of couples, with a range of results Rojas-de-Gracia et al., 2019. That notwithstanding, none of these studies has included the perception of the child, a witness with agency in the making of decisions. Children may also be more objective, though this claim would need to be tested. While this solution has been proposed as a future line of research (Rojas-de-Gracia et al., 2019), it remains unexplored.

This is precisely the research problem of the present work: analyze the perceptions not only of the parents, but also of the children to determine who influences decisions about family tourism and be able to compare the degree of consensus between them. Therefore, this paper takes up a topic that has been forgotten by the authors but, nevertheless, is highly important for academics and professionals in the sector alike. Academics may be able to find ways of better designing their own research, and people who work in the tourism industry will come away with the most realistic look possible at what role each member of the couple plays in the decision-making process, and thus design marketing strategies accordingly.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Attribution theory

For decades, social psychology has tried to elucidate the reasons that different people's perceptions about a given subject or their behavior do not coincide, despite the fact that they are considering the same reality. The model of consensus on accuracy in interpersonal perceptions set out by Kenny (1991) established that, although different individuals may coincide in their opinion on someone (high consensus), this perception does not necessarily reflect the true personality or behavior of that person (high accuracy). In spite of that, given the difficulty of defining if a judgement made in a social context is precise, researchers have often interpreted a high level of consensus as indicative of precision. From this arises the importance of studying consensus among the individuals' perceptions.

The degree of consensus among observers and its causes have been studied through a variety of theoretical approaches in psychology and social science. Attribution theory, initially formulated by Heider (1958), holds that people explain the causes of behaviors and events by attributing them to internal (dispositional) factors or external (situational) factors. The differences between these attributions can lead to diverging interpretations about the same situation. There have been numerous studies reinforcing and expanding upon this theory since it was developed. To synthesize, it has been pointed out that the discrepancy in perception between two people does not only depend on available objective information; rather, mental frameworks, emotional processes, cultural contexts and cognitive biases influence the interpretation of a subject or event (Harvey and Weary 1984; Muschetto and Siegel 2021).

That notwithstanding, the breadth and complexity of the field of attribution theory makes it a theory with currency for researchers and one which needs to be further developed by empirical studies in numerous fields (Kenny 1991; Muschetto and Siegel 2021). Along these same lines, ever since Harvey and Weary (1984) highlighted the need for future research to consider attributions between members of a close relationship, as is the case of family members, there has been work to be done. While some research has been conducted in this sense, most of these studies fall within the field of psychology and seek to help understand the dynamics of intimate

relationships (Thompson and Snyder 1986; Manusov and Harvey 2001; Fletcher and Fincham 2013).

2.2 Consensus on the perceived influence of partners on tourism decisions

Couple consensus or dyadic consensus can be defined as the degree of agreement or disagreement about the relative influence of the members of a couple based on each of their perceptions (Heer 1963). The few studies that have studied dyadic consensus have not come to conclusions that are widely shared among the research community. On top of this, there is also the indifference of modern researchers who are more interested in other, more popular topics. Studies that have considered the questions have approached it in two main ways: at the aggregate level and at the individual level. At the aggregate level, spousal consensus is compared by taking the sample totals for each gender, whereas at the individual level, consensus compares the level of agreement between the two partners (Kang and Hsu 2005).

Most studies have revealed few differences between men's and women's perceptions at an aggregate level (Granbois and Willett 1970; Davis and Rigaux 1974; Burns 1977; White and Johnson 2001; Kancheva and Marinov 2014). That is, at the aggregate level, they agreed on the relative influence. However, when perceptions between partners are compared, the level of agreement is lower (Wilkening and Morrison 1963; Burchinal and Bauder 1965; Scanzoni 1965; Burns and Hopper 1986; Godwin and Scanzoni 1989; Madrigal and Miller 1996; Lee and Beatty 2002; Gram 2013). Mohan (1995) asserted that analysis at the aggregate level can mask the results that occur at the individual level between couples and explained that to understand the consensus between couples, analysis needs to be performed at the individual level, i.e., comparing the responses of men and women within the couple to identify any disagreements that may exist.

Davis and Rigaux (1974), by comparing the responses of the two spouses, distinguished within "non consensus", between the "modesty effect" and the "vanity effect". The "modesty effect" occurs when one or both spouses overestimate the influence of the other or underestimate their own influence on a decision, and the "vanity effect" occurs when one or both spouses overestimate their own influence on a decision or underestimate that of the other. Burns (1977) proposed a more comprehensive classification of nine categories, detailing all possible cases, as shown in Table 1. According to this classification, there are three categories of consensus

Table 1 Consensus and non-consensus classification of the responses of couples

Response of husbands	Response of wives		
	Husband-dominant	Joint	Wife-dominant
Husband-dominant	Agreed role	Vanity of man	Disputed role
Joint	Modesty of woman	Agreed role	Vanity of woman
Wife-dominant	Conceded role	Modesty of man	Agreed role

Burns (1977)

(husband-dominant, wife-dominant and joint decision) and six categories of “non consensus”, depending on the comparison of men’s and women’s responses. On other occasions, researchers have often simply ranked non consensus cases according to the degree of their disagreement, subtracting the influence score that one member gives to himself or herself from the influence score that his or her partner gives to him or her (Douglas and Wind 1978; Bronner and de Hoog 2008).

In research dedicated exclusively to the study of couples’ roles when deciding on family vacations, the percentages of couples who agree on their perceptions range from 70 to 80% (Douglas and Wind 1978; Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980; Dellaert et al. 1998; Martínez-Salinas and Polo-Redondo 1999; Litvin et al. 2004; Xia et al. 2006; Lee and Marshall 2015). On the other hand, Barlés-Arizón et al. (2013a, b) reported moderate consensus (approximately 60% of couples), and Bronner and de Hoog (2008) found the existence of small disagreements in more than half of the couples and medium disagreements in 25% of the cases. However, in calculating these percentages, researchers have not taken into account concordances between responses that may have been the result of chance. In other words, consensus has traditionally been measured too simply (Rojas-de-Gracia et al. 2019). With respect to the sense of “non consensus”, both in goods and services research in general and in tourism research in particular, studies have been inconclusive, finding modesty biases (Burns 1977; Bonfield 1978), vanity (Filiatrault and Ritchie 1980; Kozak and Karadag 2012) or both (Granbois and Willett 1970; Davis and Rigaux 1974; Rojas-de-Gracia and Alarcón-Urbistondo 2018; Rojas-de-Gracia et al. 2018).

In the specific case of consensus between members of a couple regarding their perceptions about influence exerted in decision making, researchers have offered a number of theoretical explanations for the lack of consensus. Douglas and Wind (1978) identified three reasons why these discrepancies might exist: first, because they are the result of an ambiguous question about the area of authority; second, because it is difficult to remember a decision made in the past; and finally, because they are not aware of who is truly responsible for the decision. Safilios-Rothschild (1969) argued that spouses’ responses tend to reflect prevailing cultural norms and values about ideal family behavior, which may affect one spouse more than another, distorting their perception.

On the other hand, Danes et al. (1998) also put forward their theory, which is based on the reasoning of Hollerbach (1980). The former established that consensus in response is one way to measure the amount of active and passive decision making that exists within the couple’s dynamics. While passive decisions are those that respond to internalized social norms, active decisions involve, to a certain extent, a transgression of these norms. In either case, according to Danes et al. (1998), the number of active and passive decisions would be directly proportional to the consensus because, if the decisions are passive, there is a common assumption of the role of each member, and if they are active, this assumption is easy to observe knowing that they are acting “against the grain”.

Several strategies have been proposed to address discrepancies in interlocutor perceptions of influence exerted. One is to modify the formulation of the question (Douglas and Wind 1978; Corfman 1989; Labrecque and Ricard 2001; Lee and Marshall 2015). Instead of inquiring about influence in a direct and generic

way, as was done in the Davis and Rigaux (1974) study, more specific questions should be formulated. However, Bonfield (1978) replicated Davis and Rigaux's study using considerably more detailed questions and obtained similar levels of agreement in the responses.

More recent research in this vein, such as that conducted by Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2018), suggests that the identification of the decision maker is easier when the questions are formulated with a level of detail that allows them to be associated with physical activities rather than purely cognitive activities, resulting in greater agreement between the pair. Specifically, they reported that there is greater agreement between the couple when it comes to identifying the information seeker than when it comes to identifying the decision initiator. This phenomenon is attributed to the fact that information seeking generally involves physical activities, such as asking questions or searching the internet, whereas identifying who recognizes the need to travel is more complicated, as it is not associated with a visible or easily recognizable activity.

The use of observational techniques, such as during a couple's visit to a travel agency, has also been proposed to analyze the dynamics of decision making (Granbois and Willett 1970; Lee and Marshall 2002). However, this strategy has been criticized because observers may have subjective judgments about the behavior of the observed individuals (Dunsing and Hafstrom 1975). For example, Kenkel (1961) concluded that female observers tended to attribute more influence to the female partner. Despite these limitations, several authors have highlighted the importance of employing qualitative techniques to complement and deepen the information obtained through questionnaires (Decrop 2000; Nanda et al. 2007; Rojas-de-Gracia et al. 2019).

A third alternative has been proposed, which consists of requesting that not only the two members of the couple complete the questionnaire but also a third person, such as adolescent children, who are recognized in the literature as being able to describe the role distribution in family vacation decision-making and who, in principle, can offer a more objective perspective (Kozak and Karadag 2012; Lertwannawit and Gulid 2014; Spiers 2017; Su et al. 2019; Rojas-de-Gracia et al. 2019). In fact, Cheng et al. (2019) based their study on adolescents' perceptions of the influence exerted by their parents in making decisions related to family vacations.

Only two studies have been identified in high-impact publications that have taken the initiative to collect three responses per household (father, mother and child) to examine the influence on family vacation decision making. These studies were conducted by Belch et al. (1985) and their replication was conducted years later by Shoham and Dalakas (2003). However, the methodology used in both does not allow us to assess the level of agreement among the three responses, since they aggregate the data in such a way that the score on the influence of each member of the couple is the average of three scores: the one that each one assigns to him/herself, the one assigned by his/her partner, and the one assigned by the child. Therefore, it is not feasible to determine to what extent the score that the child gives to the parents differs from the score that the parents assign to themselves or to their partners. Consequently, this strategy has not yet been validated.

This is precisely the objective of our work: the analysis of the perception of the influence on tourism decisions taking into account not only the response of the two partners, but also that of the children accompanying them on the vacation trip. Answering this question may shed light on the level of consensus among the different perceptions of the family members and, consequently, test whether external observers could help clarify who exerts the greatest influence on tourism decisions.

3 Methodology

3.1 Sample characteristics

Since this work is a continuation of an Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019), published in 2019, the characteristics of the sample in terms of the parents coincide with those described there. To carry out the work presented here, it did not make sense to work with a new sample, since, in this case, the objective is to analyze the extent to which the responses of the father and the mother show consensus with those of the child. This was made possible by the fact that the questionnaires designed were filled out not only by the parents but also by a common child between the ages of 10 and 18.

3.2 Questionnaire design

To carry out this study, a questionnaire was designed and validated by a group of six experts in the academic and professional field of tourism, as described in Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019). Afterward, 30 couples completed a pretest to correct any possible errors in interpretation. The final questionnaire was divided into two parts, with each family member (father, mother, and child) completing it independently. The first part gathered information on sociodemographic variables and travel behavior. These variables are shown in Table 2.

In the second part, they were asked about the influence perceived by each of the members of the couple regarding various aspects in making decisions about family vacations. These aspects align with the three most commonly studied stages in the making of tourist decisions: initiation, information search and final decision (Belch et al. 1985; Belch and Willis-Flurry 2002; Rojas-de-Gracia et al. 2018), as well as with seven sub-decisions that have received considerable attention in the literature: accommodation, activities, budget, date, destination, restaurants and transport (Zalatan 1998; Wang et al. 2004, 2007; Rojas-de-Gracia et al. 2018). Table 3 shows the variables involved in what we mean by influence exerted by each member of the couple in these aspects, as well as their respective categories. It is important to highlight that, although the questions in the three questionnaires were the same, the categories of responses were different for the child's questionnaire, since only the influence of the parents was being evaluated. Additionally, the table shows that for its measurement, direct questions were asked, as is common in this type of study (Madrigal and Miller 1996).

Table 2 Socio-demographic and travel behavior data

Variables	Categories	Couples (%) (100% = 371)
Family type	Traditional family	97.6
	Restructured family	2.4
Family union type	Married in church	81.9
	Married by civil ceremony	13.8
	Unmarried	4.3
Age difference	Same age	11.5
	Less than 5 years	69.5
	Between 5 and 10 years	16.3
	Over 10 years	2.7
Men's employment status	Not working	8.2
	Working	91.8
Women's employment status	Not working	38.7
	Working	61.3
Difference in educational attainment	Men more than women	16.8
	Woman more than man	26.6
	Same educational level	56.6
Purpose	Exclusively for leisure	81.9
	Visiting family and friends	15.1
	Others	3.0
Frequency of vacations	At least annually	53.6
	Every two to three years	25.3
	Sporadically	21.0
Age of child	Between 8 and 13 years old	24.3
	Between 14 and 18 years old	74.7
Gender of child	Boy	59.5
	Girl	40.5

Adapted from Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019)

3.3 Data collection

As described in the Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019), the questionnaires were distributed to students in different public and private educational centers in Spain. The aim was to obtain responses from men, women and children in the same family in different areas of coastal and inland Andalusia, southern Spain. In order to find participants, educational centers were contacted and meetings were held with their directors in order to explain to them the purpose of this research. Schools that agreed to participate were sent questionnaires that teachers were to distribute among the students. In total, 1200 questionnaires were distributed.

Participating instructors gave three questionnaires to each student in their group: one for the father, one for the mother and one for the child. They were provided

Table 3 Data on influence exerted by members of a couple on decision making about family vacations

Stages/Subdecisions	Categories in the parents' questionnaire	Categories in the children's questionnaire
Who proposed going on that vacation?	1. Mainly my partner	1. Mainly my father
Who searched for vacation information?	2. Mainly me	2. Mainly my mother
Who was the person who made a final decision and decided that you were going on vacation?	3. Both of us	3. Both of them
Who do you think most influenced the following decisions during your last vacation in the following aspects:	4. Other/None	4. Other/None
Accommodations?		
Activities?		
Budget?		
Date?		
Destination?		
Restaurants?		
Transport?		
Own elaboration		

instructions that the questionnaires were to be filled out separately and to base their responses on the most recent family vacation done where the family spent at least three nights away from home. To that end, it was asked that the destination be agreed to beforehand among the three participants to ensure consistency. Thanks to the influence of tutors, who tend to be figures who enjoy the respect of parents and students, 536 questionnaires were returned, which represents a response rate of 44.67%. Of these 536 returned questionnaires, 371 were valid. The 165 invalid questionnaires were mostly discarded because only one parent had answered. It should be noted that no investigation was done into the family status of the students so as to avoid revealing personal data. Keeping in mind that 10.1% of households in Spain are single-parent homes, this proportion of invalid questionnaires is not out of the ordinary. Other inconsistencies, such as disagreements about the vacation destination, also lead to the responses being discarded.

These invalid responses aside, there was a desire to shed light on the lack of responses. According to conversations with the instructors, there is a lack of interest and low degree of involvement on the part of some students and parents. It is important to keep in mind that this activity was not for a grade, which influenced the non-response rate. Even if it had been graded, there is an achievement problem among students in Spain. In fact, the percentage of Spanish students who do not finish secondary education (37%) is much higher than the European Union average (21%), according to the Better Life Index (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.). All of this makes the lack of interest mentioned by the teachers unsurprising. Therefore, it seems logical to believe that the non-response rate does not indicate some sort of systematic blindness toward the object of study, which would be the most problematic type of error. The sample data are shown in Table 2.

3.4 Data analysis techniques

To achieve the objective of this research, which aims to investigate the consensus among the triad of fathers, mothers, and children regarding the influence of family vacations on different stages and subdecisions, traditional methodologies have been combined with less commonly used methods, as is also done in Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019). First, to identify the roles played by family members, a frequency analysis was carried out. This analysis enables the graphical representation of viability triangles, a commonly accepted conceptual and analytical method for analyzing the roles of the couple in family purchasing decisions (Xia et al.). Each stage and subdecision is plotted on a two-axis graph, with the vertical axis measuring the relative influence between genders. For this measure, men's influence is coded as 1, 2 for joint influence, and 3 for women's influence. Thus, a stage represented by a value of 1 would indicate complete male domination, whereas a value of 3 would indicate complete female domination. Nonetheless, any percentage of families making the decision jointly combined with the other party in which the decision is split equally between husband-dominant and wife-dominant decisions would average 2. Therefore, the horizontal axis measures the number of responses indicating joint decision-making. A decision is considered joint if it exceeds 50% of the responses.

Following the recommendations of Kang and Hsu (2005), this research conducts a study of response consensus using both the aggregate and individual approaches, i.e., by family. To analyze the data at an aggregate level, we used Pearson's chi-square statistic based on contingency tables. One variable in the tables is the family member (father, mother, or child), and the other is the decision structure based on the influence exerted. The aim is to identify whether there are differences in the perception of the latter depending on the family member concerned.

To analyze consensus at the family level, percentages of agreement and disagreement between dyads (father–mother, father–child, and mother–child) were presented. Additionally, Cohen's weighted kappa index, which is a more demanding measure than the simple percentages commonly used by researchers (Davis and Rigaux 1974; Burns 1977; White and Johnson 2001; Bronner and de Hoog 2008). This index measures the agreement between two observers on their corresponding rankings of "N" items in "C" mutually exclusive but sortable categories. It determines the degree to which the observed agreement exceeds what would be expected by pure chance (Cohen 1968). The ideal value is close to one. Furthermore, the weighted kappa index is preferred over Cohen's kappa index in our research because it takes into account the degree of disagreement. This is important because if the two members attribute the influence to different people alone, the degree of disagreement will be greater than if one of them perceives that the decision was made jointly by the two members. Specifically, disagreements were measured via linear weighting, given that only three categories were analyzed (husband-dominant, wife-dominant or joint decision).

Finally, to compare the triads of the responses, we utilized the Fleiss general index and the kappa indices for the individual categories (Fleiss 1981). This test helps to determine in which category the observers have had a higher degree of consensus. As with the weighted kappa, the optimal values are those that are close to one, meaning that there is consensus among the observers.

4 Results

4.1 Perception of partner's influence on stages and subdecisions of family vacations

Table 4 displays the decision structure based on the influence of couples where one or both partners were the primary decision-makers for vacation planning. Similarly, Figs. 1, 2 and 3 show the viability triangles, as perceived by men, women and children, respectively. As deduced by Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019) work, according to the sample of both men and women, most of the couples analyzed consider that the choice of restaurants, budget and transportation are joint decisions, with percentages that believe so close to or above 80%. On the other hand, the joint decisions that are made to a lesser extent include decision initiation (61.52% according to the male sample, hereafter a.m.s., and 61.16% according to the female sample, hereafter a.f.s.), destination (66.86% a.m.s. and 68.01% a.f.s.) and accommodation (71.82% a.m.s. and 71.34% a.f.s.). The search

Table 4 Influence on the stages and sub-decisions of family vacations

	HD ^a		J ^b		WD ^c		Total
	Freq ^d	%	Freq ^d	%	Freq ^d	%	
<i>Father's response</i>							
Accommodation	36	10.91	237	71.82	57	17.27	330
Activities	27	7.96	268	79.06	44	12.98	339
Budget	30	8.36	295	82.17	34	9.47	359
Date	39	11.78	253	76.44	39	11.78	331
Destination	47	13.54	232	66.86	68	19.60	347
Final decision	32	8.86	276	76.45	53	14.68	361
Initiation	46	13.94	203	61.52	81	24.55	330
Restaurants	27	8.39	66	82.61	29	9.01	322
Search for information	88	28.95	115	37.83	101	33.22	304
Transport	49	14.63	267	79.70	19	5.57	335
<i>Mother's response</i>							
Accommodation	32	9.97	229	71.34	60	18.69	321
Activities	27	8.01	261	77.45	49	14.54	337
Budget	27	7.58	293	82.30	36	10.11	356
Date	45	13.47	248	74.25	41	12.28	334
Destination	42	12.10	236	68.01	69	19.88	347
Final decision	29	8.15	273	76.69	54	15.17	356
Initiation	50	15.29	200	61.16	77	23.55	327
Restaurants	24	7.52	270	84.64	25	7.84	319
Search for information	84	28.09	120	40.13	95	31.77	299
Transport	44	13.21	268	80.48	21	6.31	333
<i>Child's response</i>							
Accommodation	60	18.18	77	23.33	193	58.48	330
Activities	30	9.71	55	16.82	242	74.01	327
Budget	36	10.03	51	14.21	272	75.77	359
Date	40	12.38	51	15.79	232	71.83	323
Destination	48	14.29	81	24.11	207	61.61	336
Final decision	40	11.43	67	19.14	243	69.43	350
Initiation	45	13.98	78	24.22	199	61.80	322
Restaurants	19	5.94	42	13.13	259	80.94	320
Search for information	85	30.04	113	39.93	85	30.04	283
Transport	77	22.92	27	8.04	232	69.05	336

^aHusband-dominant^bJoint^cWife-dominant^dFrequency

Own elaboration based on the Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019)

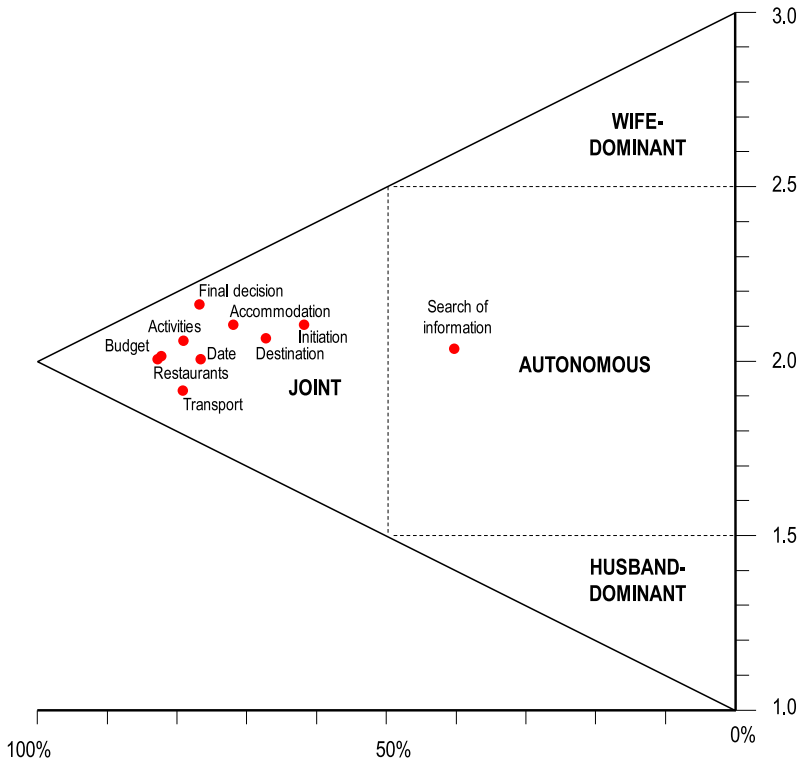


Fig. 1 Feasibility triangle stages and sub-decisions according to men. Source: Own elaboration adapted from Davis and Rigaux (1974)

for information is an autonomous decision, despite having a score close to 2 on the vertical axis. This is because the proportions between the responses indicating that the search was wife-dominant and husband-dominant are quite similar (28.95% vs. 33.22% [$p=0.254$] a.m.s. and 28.09% vs. 31.77% [$p=0.327$] a.f.s.), with no significant differences between these proportions in any of the samples.

In contrast, according to the children’s responses, the decision-making process for restaurants, budget, activities, date, and final decision is primarily the responsibility of the woman, with percentages close to 70%. On the other hand, the children consider that the decision to initiate, choose a destination, transport, and accommodation are autonomous decisions. However, a higher percentage of them attributed these decisions to women than to men. In fact, these percentages show significant differences for the four decisions (13.98% vs. 61.80% [$p<0,001$]; 14.29% vs. 61.61% [$p<0,001$]; 22.92% vs. 69.05% [$p<0,001$]; 18.18% vs. 58.48% [$p<0,001$], respectively). Only the search for information is considered an autonomous decision, although with a score close to 2 on the vertical axis. Interestingly, the proportion of children who considered that the search was performed by the father was identical to the proportion who considered that the search was performed by the mother (30.04%).

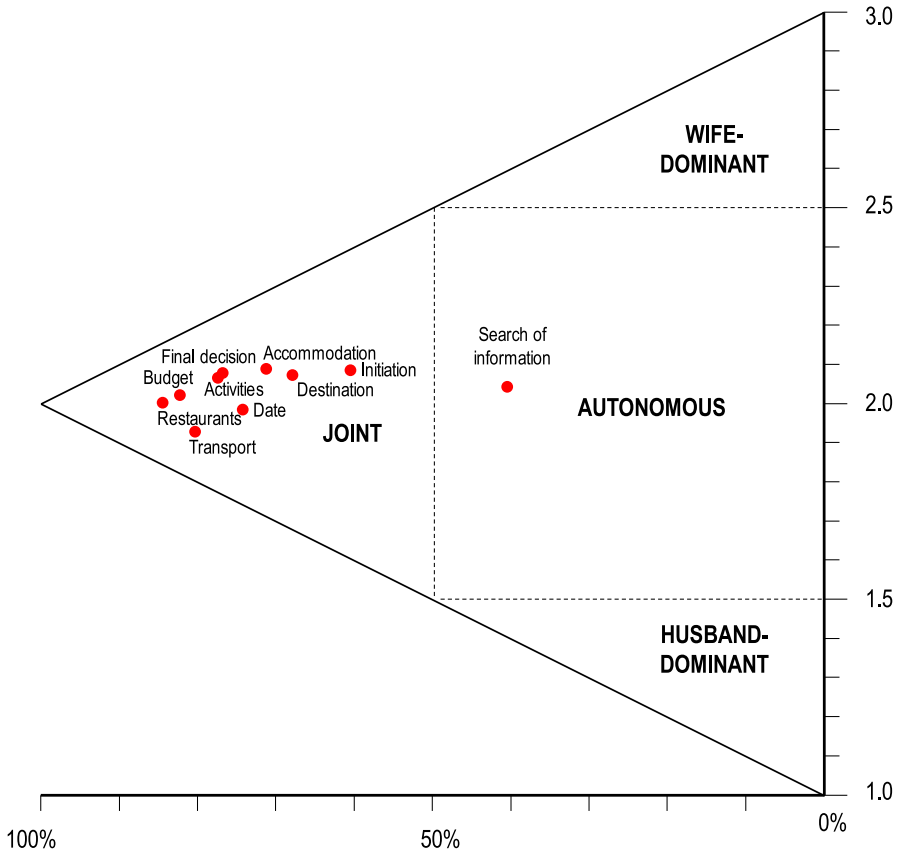


Fig. 2 Feasibility triangle stages and sub-decisions according to women. Source: Own elaboration adapted from Davis and Rigaux (1974)

4.2 Consensus at the aggregate level

When the analysis of partner influence consensus is performed at the aggregate level, the differences in perceptions at each stage and subdecisions between the different members of the three samples at the aggregate level become apparent. As shown in Table 5, there are no significant differences between men and women. On the other hand, analyzing the partners' responses alongside those of the children yields completely different results. Thus, at the aggregate level, children have perceptions about the influence exerted by their parents that differ significantly from their own, except when seeking information. In the latter case, all three analyzed samples concur that the decision to search for information is autonomous.

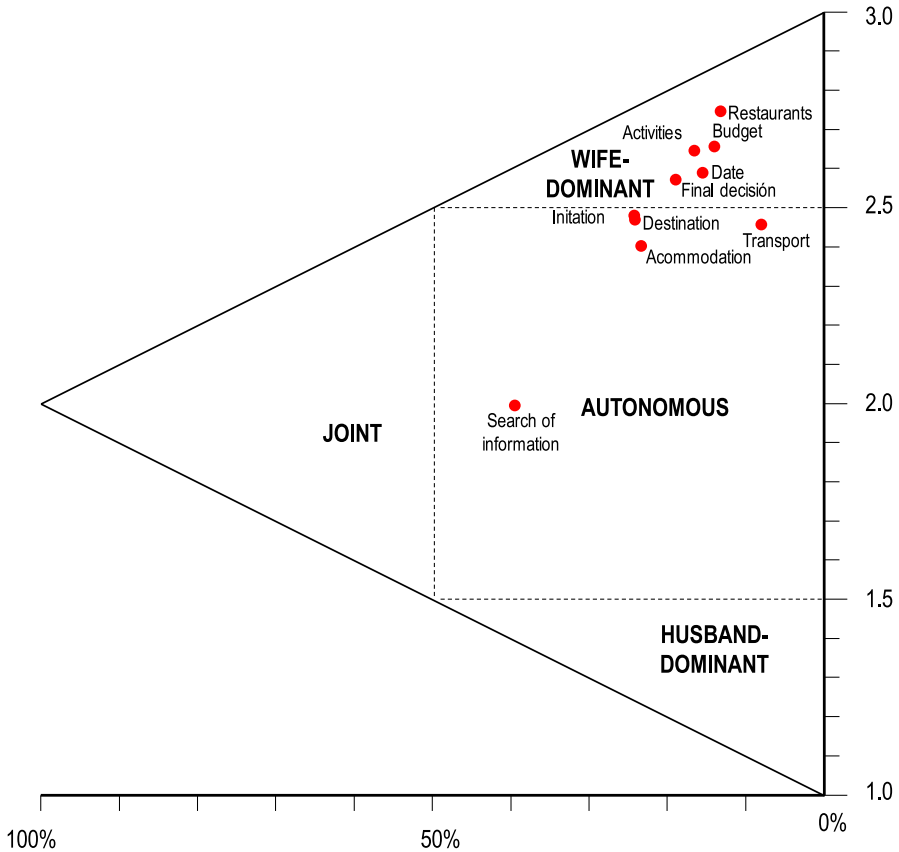


Fig. 3 Feasibility triangle stages and sub-decisions according to children. Source: Own elaboration adapted from Davis and Rigaux (1974)

4.3 Consensus at the individual level

The analysis at the individual level compares the percentage of couples (father–mother, father–child and mother–child) who agree with the person who had the most influence on vacation decisions (see Table 6). For parents, the level of agreement is above 80% in all cases except for the choice of destination, which represents 79.7%. There was a significant correlation in the perception of the influence of transportation (87.4%), restaurants (87.4%), and vacation activities (87.0%). When men and women disagree, although the percentages do not exceed 13% of couples in any case, the vanity effect is greater in the case of women, who assign themselves greater influence than that granted by their partner. However, in men, the concession effect is predominant. There are only two exceptions to this general rule. The first is the choice of transportation, for which the man attributes more importance to himself than his partner does, and the woman attributes less

Table 5 Consensus on the perception of influence at the aggregate level

Stages/Sub-decisions	Pearson's Chi-square		
	Father–mother	Father–child	Mother–child
Accommodation	0.325	161.513***	153.847***
Activities	0.356	277.570***	262.361***
Budget	0.209	357.726***	352.355***
Date	0.486	271.629***	264.473***
Destination	0.322	142.975***	145.049***
Final decision	0.138	250.088***	246.805***
Initiation	0.277	105.262***	107.698***
Restaurants	0.513	347.978***	360.927***
Search for information	0.342	0.696	0.332
Transportation	0.365	382.893***	381.851***

*** $p < 0.001$

Own elaboration based on the Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019)

importance than the man does. The second exception is the budget decision, for which both spouses have a vanity effect.

As with the analysis at the aggregate level, the children's responses differed from those of their parents. In fact, non consensus is the general rule, with discrepancies ranging from 86.8% in restaurant choices to 66.5% in parent–child information searches. Specifically, the man assigns himself more influence in all decisions than his child grants him, whereas the woman assumes less influence than her child perceives her to have. In both cases, the exception was the search for information. The child gave it more influence than the father perceived he had (36.4% of the families) and less influence than the mother felt she had exerted (36.0% of the families).

To account for chance occurrences, we calculated Cohen's kappa index via the linear method, as presented in Table 7. On the basis of the guidelines of Altman (1991), adapted from Landis and Koch (1977), the analysis of this index shows that, in general, despite the high percentages of agreement between the responses of the father and the mother, only decisions on accommodations, activities, initiation, transportation and, above all, the search for information are considered high levels of consensus, as evidenced in Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019). When partners' responses concerning budgets, dates, destinations, final decisions, and restaurants are compared, the level of consensus is considered merely moderate.

In the case of the father–child and mother–child dyads, the level of concordance is very low, reaching negative values in most cases, which means that the concordance is even lower than would be expected by chance. This is especially true in the case of the choice of activities, the final decision-maker, the initiator and the choice of transportation, since there is no consensus with either what the father perceives or what the mother perceives.

To deepen the consensus when taking into account the responses of the three joints (fathers, mothers and children) without considering those produced by chance,

Table 6 Percentage of couples with consensus in perception of influence

	Consensus (%)					No consensus (%)					Total
	J ^a	HD ^b	WD ^c	Total	MV ^d	WV ^e	MC ^f	WC ^g	DR ^h	RG ⁱ	
<i>Father–mother</i>											
Accommodation	63.8	7.3	12.4	83.5	2.9	5.7	4.4	2.2	1.0	0.3	16.5
Activities	72.6	4.9	9.5	87.0	2.8	4.6	3.1	1.5	0.3	0.6	13.0
Budget	76.0	4.3	5.4	85.7	3.4	4.0	3.1	2.0	0.6	1.1	14.3
Date	67.4	8.7	7.1	83.2	2.5	4.7	3.4	4.0	0.9	1.2	16.8
Destination	57.8	8.3	13.6	79.7	4.7	5.6	5.6	2.9	0.9	0.6	20.3
Final destination	69.2	4.8	9.1	83.1	2.6	4.6	4.8	2.8	1.7	0.3	16.9
Initiation	55.0	9.4	18.8	83.2	2.8	3.4	3.4	3.1	1.6	2.5	16.8
Restaurants	77.9	4.6	4.9	87.4	3.3	2.9	3.6	2.3	0.3	0.3	12.6
Search for information	33.0	25.1	27.8	85.9	3.1	3.1	3.1	1.4	1.7	1.7	14.1
Transportation	74.1	9.3	4.0	87.4	5.2	1.5	1.2	3.7	0.6	0.3	12.6
<i>Father–child</i>											
Accommodation	10.0	6.1	4.2	20.3	53.7	–	21.3	–	2.6	2.3	79.9
Activities	6.7	2.6	4.2	13.5	67.9	–	13.7	–	3.8	1.0	86.4
Budget	7.8	4.3	3.7	15.8	70.1	–	10.1	–	3.2	0.9	84.3
Date	8.2	4.9	4.9	18.0	61.6	–	13.5	–	6.2	0.7	82.0
Destination	9.6	7.1	6.5	23.2	53.4	–	17.1	–	4.7	1.6	76.8
Final destination	10.2	3.2	5.5	18.9	61.0	–	14.3	–	4.1	1.7	81.1
Initiation	5.0	8.6	5.0	18.6	53.5	–	21.1	–	5.0	2.0	81.6
Restaurants	7.4	1.7	4.1	13.2	71.3	–	9.8	–	5.7	0.0	86.8
Search for information	8.6	22.3	2.6	33.5	23.4	–	36.4	–	5.2	1.5	66.5
Transportation	3.8	9.8	2.2	15.2	64.2	–	15.5	–	4.1	0.3	84.1
<i>Mother–child</i>											
Accommodation	9.8	5.6	4.9	20.3	–	22.6	–	51.3	2.3	3.6	79.8
Activities	7.8	3.9	5.5	17.2	–	13.3	–	65.2	0.6	3.6	82.7
Budget	6.7	3.8	3.2	13.7	–	11.0	–	71.8	1.2	2.3	86.3
Date	6.1	5.8	4.2	16.1	–	15.0	–	62.2	0.0	6.7	83.9
Destination	9.6	5.9	6.5	22.0	–	19.1	–	52.5	1.9	4.6	78.1
Final destination	9.4	2.9	6.2	18.5	–	14.4	–	62.1	1.8	3.2	81.5
Initiation	6.5	9.2	5.2	20.6	–	19.3	–	52.0	2.0	5.9	79.2
Restaurants	7.9	2.1	4.1	14.1	–	7.5	–	74.3	0.0	4.1	85.9
Search for information	8.6	21.7	2.6	32.9	–	36.0	–	25.0	1.5	4.5	67.0
Transportation	2.5	8.6	2.2	13.3	–	17.5	–	64.5	0.6	4.1	86.7

^aJoint^bHusband-dominant^cWife-dominant^dMan's vanity^eWomen's vanity^fMan's concession^gWomen's concession^hDisputed roleⁱRole granted

Table 6 (continued)

Own elaboration based on the Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019)

Table 7 Cohen's weighted Kappa index according to linear model

Stage/Sub-decision	Father–mother	Father–child	Mother–child
Accommodation	0.633***	−0.050	−0.068*
Activities	0.634***	−0.096***	−0.051*
Budget	0.504***	−0.005	−0.035
Date	0.572***	−0.009	−0.017
Destination	0.598***	−0.013	−0.047
Final destination	0.540***	−0.062*	−0.066*
Initiation	0.659***	−0.093**	−0.057**
Restaurants	0.550***	−0.048**	−0.021
Search for information	0.794***	0.142**	0.138
Transportation	0.617***	0.094***	0.062**

* $p < 0.01$ ** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.001$

Own elaboration based on the Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019)

Table 8 Fleiss overall index and kappa indexes for individual categories

Stage/Sub-decision	Kappa general	Kappa for HD ^a	Kappa for J ^b	Kappa for WD ^c
Accommodation	−0.013	.404***	−0.108***	−0.128***
Activities	−0.118***	.426***	−0.178***	−0.234***
Budget	−0.145***	.421***	−0.213***	−0.278***
Date	−0.048	.422***	−0.121***	−0.216***
Destination	0.010	.437***	−0.080*	−0.117***
Final destination	−0.080***	.314***	−0.132***	−0.176***
Initiation	0.027	.559***	−0.062	−0.166***
Restaurants	−0.180***	.334***	−0.220***	−0.285***
Search for information	0.252***	.691***	0.060	0.040
Transportation	−0.047	.456***	−0.175***	−0.244***

^aHusband-dominant^bJoint^cWife-dominant* $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.001$

Own elaboration

the kappa index of Fleiss (1981), shown in Table 8, was calculated. Once again, it is clear that there is no consensus on the triad under study. When the index is analyzed by category, it is noteworthy that the dominant-husband decisions have the highest

level of consensus. In addition, there is a good level of agreement in the case of identifying the information seeker.

5 Discussion

As was evident in Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019), in general, according to what is found in the sample of couples, the results of the analyzed stages and subdecisions align with the literature, except for determining the budget, because previous studies have shown that men tend to dominate financial decisions, including budgeting (Jenkins 1978; Ritchie and Filiatrault 1980; Belch et al. 1985; Madrigal 1994; Zalatan 1998; Koc 2004; Kang and Hsu 2005; Wang et al. 2007). Therefore, in this respect, this work confirms the conclusions of other publications that the decision is made jointly between the parties involved (Burns 1977; Harcar et al. 2005; Barlés-Arizón et al. 2013a). It is possible that women are now continuing to achieve levels of equality even in areas of decision making that have traditionally been considered men's domains (Majlesi 2016).

However, according to the children's perspective, decisions about family vacations adopt a basically female-dominated approach. In other words, these results support the notion that family vacations are assigned primarily to women (Howard and Madrigal 1990; Zalatan 1998; Shoham and Dalakas 2003; Mottiar and Quinn 2004; Gram 2005). In addition, according to children's perceptions, tourism decisions are mainly autonomous decisions, contrary to what their parents think and what has so far been mainly maintained by the literature, which is in line with the findings of Cheng et al. (2019).

This influence that the children attribute to their mothers may be due to the children considering that vacations are domestic matters and, in turn, that domestic matters are supposed to be handled by mothers. The literature agrees that vacation decisions belong to the domestic sphere (Mottiar and Quinn 2004; Bronner and de Hoog 2008; Barlés-Arizón et al. 2013b; Rojas-de-Gracia and Alarcón-Urbistondo 2016). In addition, and despite recent advances in Western societies, even now the roles of caretaker and person responsible for domestic tasks are mostly taken on by women (Nisic and Trübner 2024). This is such an entrenched state of affairs that many government programs in a large number of countries are aimed at achieving a more equitable distribution of household tasks.

Heider's (1958) attribution theory may be behind the explanation as to why children attribute more influence to mothers. The theory establishes that humans tend to look for causes for the events they observe because it allows them to understand, predict and control their social environment. Therefore, when faced with the difficulty of identifying all the causes that explain a given social element—in this case influence exerted—people tend to simplify their interpretation.

At this point, it seems logical to ask why mothers and fathers do not align with the perceptions of their children. Two very different reasons may explain this. The first is that the perception of the child is not the most suitable, since the people who really know the process behind a decision are the people who made it (in this case, the parents). The second explanation is radically different from the first, because it

would not be unreasonable to think that the fathers and mothers tend to offer socially desirable responses, as Safilios-Rothschild (1969) noted. That is, despite being assured of the confidentiality of the data, they might prefer to state and convince themselves that family tourist decisions are, in effect, made jointly between the two of them.

This aside, it is curious that the only stage considered an autonomous decision by fathers, mothers, and children is the search for information. This finding reinforces the idea of many authors that the fact that this search requires physical activity, such as consulting the internet or asking family or friends, makes it easier to identify the family member who plays the leading role at this stage (Davis 1971; Douglas and Wind 1978; Quarm 1981; Rojas-de-Gracia and Alarcón-Urbistondo 2018; Rojas-de-Gracia et al. 2018, 2019). Consequently, as stated by Quarm (1981), respondents may find it easier to identify the person in charge of the search than those responsible for other purely cognitive aspects, such as making the final decision or determining the mode of transport to use.

That notwithstanding, the absence of differences in responses between the couples considered at the gender level shown by the Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019), that is, at an aggregate level, was completely aligned with what other authors established (Granbois and Willett 1970; Davis and Rigaux 1974; Burns 1977; White and Johnson 2001; Kancheva and Marinov 2014). In light of the analysis of the children's responses, nuances should be made. First, as established Mohan (1995), this analysis may mask disagreements that may have occurred at the couple level. This leads to a cautious interpretation of the high percentages of consensus shown by the couples. This caution becomes even more obvious when the discrepancies in the children's responses regarding their perception of their parents' influence, both individually and in the aggregate, are taken into account. This leads us to emphasize the importance of the perception effect in the field of marketing for identifying the influence exerted within a decision-making group.

The fact that when the man is the main decision maker there is greater consensus among the three members of the family, that is, it is easier to identify him, seems to reinforce the idea suggested by Danes et al. (1998). According to this author, in these cases they are active decisions because if it is considered that tourism decisions are mostly made by women, when this pattern does not hold true, it is easier to identify the person who made the decision. That is, as mentioned above, mothers may be more involved in the day-to-day organization of household affairs and the planning of family activities, including vacations. Therefore, in the cases of families where this is not the case, it may be more apparent to all. However, more studies are needed to explain why there is greater consensus on the aspects in which parents exert more influence.

Unlike Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019), which does not identify a unique pattern when analyzing discrepancies between men and women, as concluded in other studies (Granbois and Willett 1970; Davis and Rigaux 1974; Rojas-de-Gracia and Alarcón-Urbistondo 2018; Rojas-de-Gracia et al. 2018), this paper reveals, in general, a clear vanity effect in the case of men, who attribute more influence to themselves than do their children, and a clear modesty effect in the case of women who attribute less influence to themselves than their children attribute to them. This may

indicate that, although the children have a perception of their mothers as the main decision maker in decisions about family vacations, it may be that said perception is overstated to the detriment of the influence of their fathers, perhaps due to the reasons mentioned above.

6 Conclusions

The results of this study show that neither men, women nor children perceive the influence they have on tourism decisions in the same way. Although perceptions may vary among family members and depend on the specific aspect being discussed, it is not possible to make a general statement about agreement in their responses. However, there is greater consensus between the members of the couple than between each parent and the child. In general, women show a vanity effect with respect to their partner, leading them to overestimate their role in family vacation decisions, whereas men underestimate it. In the opposite way, the children ascribe more influence to their mothers than to their fathers and more than mothers ascribe to themselves, while children assign less influence to their fathers than the fathers do to themselves.

6.1 Theoretical implications

Apart from the modest contribution of these results to attribution theory, a specific theoretical implication of this work is that researchers should not rely on the perceptions of a single family member when studying the influence on tourism decisions. By having three versions of the same reality and with many discrepancies, especially in the case of the child who, a priori, was supposed to be a more impartial observer, it is questionable whether their inclusion is the solution to the methodological problems associated with this type of study. Therefore, there is a need to use other types of techniques to collect information, for example, by conducting in-depth interviews in which the agents involved can interact with each other and reach an agreement on who makes certain decisions.

6.2 Practical implications

In addition to these theoretical implications, the practical conclusions that can be drawn from this research can be useful for companies and institutions in designing marketing strategies to influence the behavior of consumers and users. Since, as stated by Riest and Trout (1993), in the marketing world, what matters most is not the objective reality of a product or brand but how it is perceived by consumers, it becomes necessary to take advantage of new technologies to design advertising campaigns in a personalized way. Thus, even if children are not the main decision makers about vacations, their growing influence on their parents means they are given greater consideration. Therefore, given that children generally perceive that mothers are the ones who make decisions about family vacations, the channels they

consume should assume this vision in communication campaigns, since advertising messages are more persuasive if consumers identify with them and the situations they present (Schiffman et al. 2010).

6.3 Limitations and future lines of research

Finally, logically, this study shares the limitation of using a convenience sample framed in a specific society, which was already present in the Rojas-de-Gracia et al. (2019) and which, on the other hand, is typical of this type of study. However, it has the added value of incorporating a third response per household. It would be necessary to further investigate the way in which families make family decisions in different countries and, as concluded in this study, with techniques that allow us to reduce perception bias, such as in-depth group interviews.

Differentiating by country would not be the only interesting direction for future work. There are other variables that would be worthy of including in studies that analyze perception consensus and that could shed further light on the results of the present study. One such variable would be the type of communication and parenting style of the families. Including this focus could help determine if communication that is more frequent and open in connection with a more authoritative parenting style allows for better mutual comprehension of the roles in tourist decisions. Another interesting line of future research would be analysis of individuals' exposure to content on social media. This may affect individual perceptions of family roles in tourist decisions, especially with regard to children. For example, it may be the case that stereotypes of ideal vacations are shown on these platforms, in which each member of the family takes on a specific role. The inclusion of this condition could be considered an outside influence that would strengthen or modify the perception of the reality of one's own family.

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