

1 **TOWARD A GENDER UNDERSTANDING OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE**
2 **COUPLE ON FAMILY VACATION DECISIONS**

3 **ABSTRACT**

4 In this investigation, a literature review is conducted on partner influence in
5 Family Vacation Decision-Making (FVDM) through the analysis of 72 empirical
6 anglophone studies over the last six decades. Studies have approached this
7 subject in very disparate ways, using one of four perspectives: (1) male and
8 female roles, (2) influences on couples, (3) dyadic consensus on the extent of
9 influence of each member, and (4) conflict in preferences and influence tactics
10 within couples. Despite the lack of research on various aspects of the FVDM of
11 couples, the conclusion shared most in the literature is that decisions regarding
12 vacations in general, as well as upon particular destinations, are joint decisions.
13 Lines of research that should be pursued in the future are also discussed.

14

15 **KEYWORDS**

16 Family vacation decision-making; influence perception; couple roles; dyadic
17 consensus; conflict and influence tactics

18 **1. INTRODUCTION**

19 Vacation travel for couples and families typically involves numerous sub-
20 decisions and often also purchases of one or more services. In this context,
21 these decisions and purchases generally imply a great risk perceived by
22 tourists. This is due to the fact that tourism usually involves a great financial risk
23 because of the substantial proportion of the family budget it consumes, as well
24 as an emotional risk, as for many consumers, vacations are the main event
25 allowing them to break their daily routine (van Raaij & Francken, 1984). In
26 addition, services related to tourism are often delivered by more than one
27 supplier (Kim, Lehto & Morrison, 2007). This means that in many cases tourists
28 have to make several decisions, for example on accommodation, or destination.
29 Furthermore, in tourism, decisions are usually taken by more than one single
30 person. In fact, the family is the common core of vacation decisions. However,
31 the main theories on decision-making assume that the subject is an individual

32 decision maker. Although these theories recognize that others influence this
33 decision, they generally do not consider their interactions throughout the
34 process.

35 The need for further research, which is apparent given the inadequacy of our
36 current knowledge, is reinforced by the demographic and social changes that
37 have occurred in recent years, which have modified the decision-making
38 process, influencing both the couple and their children. These changes include
39 the incorporation of women into the labor market, producing households with
40 two income sources, and the increasing influence of women in decision-making
41 (Kang & Hsu, 2005). Furthermore, families today are more democratic than they
42 were in the past (Bronner & de Hoog, 2008). All of these factors drive the need
43 to acquire more profound knowledge of the FVDM process, both for scientific
44 purposes and because of business implications.

45 An important aspect of the study of FVDM is the influence wielded by each
46 family member. As Szybillo, Sosaine & Tenenbein (1979) highlight, the different
47 ways of measuring influence increasingly complicate the synthesizing of results
48 generated by different studies. However, this will be one of the challenges we
49 address in this paper.

50 Until the 1980s, children were ignored in this area of research because they
51 were assumed to have little or no influence (Howard & Madrigal, 1990). Their
52 role was assumed to be passive, measured fundamentally by their influence on
53 their parents' decisions in accordance with the stage of life and because of their
54 presence given their special needs, which introduce certain limits and demands
55 on what the family can do (Thornton, Shaw & Williams, 1997). This approach
56 has evolved over time, and tourism research has increasingly considered
57 children as active agents in decision-making that make demands, requiring
58 parents to plan for or around them (Belch, Belch & Ceresino; 1985; Belch,
59 Kathleen & Willis-Flurry., 2005; Martensen & Grønholdt, 2008; Nickerson &
60 Jurowski, 2001).

61 Nevertheless, the literature confirms that parents have more influence than their
62 children in FVDM (Belch et al., 2005; Decrop & Snelders, 2005; Ekstrom,

63 Tansuhaj & Foxman, 1986; Filiatrault & Ritchie, 1980; Kozak & Karadag, 2012;
64 Ritchie & Filiatrault, 1980; Wang, Hsieh, Yeh & Tsai, 2004). For this reason, this
65 paper analyzes studies published to date on the couple, with the purpose of
66 identifying the lines of research that should be analyzed in the future by
67 scholars with regard to the subject of partner influence on FVDM.

68 **2. COUPLE FAMILY VACATION DECISION-MAKING**

69 *2.1. Study Methods*

70 Given that English is the scientific language par excellence, it is not surprising
71 that anglophone publications are relied upon as authoritative reference sources
72 by a significant proportion of researchers and marketing managers globally. We,
73 therefore, chose to conduct the study by performing a search process using the
74 following databases: EBSCOhost Electronic Journal Service, Emerald, Jstor,
75 ProQuest, SAGE Journals Online, ScienceDirect, Springer Link, Taylor &
76 Francis, and Wiley Interscience. We used two combinations of keywords: first,
77 "family decision-making" plus "vacation" or "holiday" or "tourism," and second,
78 "influence" plus "vacation" or "holiday" or "tourism." After this initial search, we
79 achieved an overall view about the influence of the couple on FVDM and noted
80 the emergence of other related subjects, including "dyadic consensus" and
81 "disconfirmation." Given the relatively recent nature of the interest in studying
82 this topic, no time restrictions were employed when searching for the most
83 relevant works covered in this article.

84 Finally, 72 anglophone works were analyzed. Among them are works that,
85 although contributing valid and interesting conclusions to the subject of focus,
86 either do not focus exclusively on couple influence (but also on the influence of
87 children), or are not solely focused on vacations. Table 1 lists the studies
88 analyzed and their study subjects.

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Nº	Author(s)	Year	Roles	Influences on	Dyadic consensus	Conflict
1	Sharp & Mott	1956	X	X	-	-
2	Weller	1968	X	X	-	-
3	Kandel & Lesser	1972	X	X	-	-
4	Cunningham & Green	1974	X	-	-	-
5	Davis & Rigaux	1974	X	-	X	-
6	Green & Cunnigham	1975	X	X	-	-
7	Green & Cunnigham	1976	X	X	-	-
8	Bonfield	1978	X	-	X	-
9	Jenkins	1978	X	X	-	-
10	Myers & Moncrief	1978	X	X	-	-
11	Smith	1979	X	X	-	-
12	Belch et al.	1980	-	-	-	X
13	Cosenza & Davis	1980	X	X	-	-
14	Filiatrault & Ritchie	1980	X	X	X	-
15	Ritchie & Filiatrault	1980	X	X	-	-
16	Cosenza & Davis	1981	X	X	-	-
17	Qualls	1982	X	-	X	-
18	Green et al.	1983	X	X	-	-
19	Belch et al.	1985	X	-	X	-
20	Shukla	1987	X	X	-	-
21	Nichols & Snepenger	1988	X	X	-	-
22	Howard & Madrigal	1990	X	X	X	-
23	Fodness	1992	X	X	-	-
24	Beachm & Tesser	1993	X	-	-	-
25	Madrigal	1993	X	X	X	-
26	Buttle	1994	-	-	-	X
27	Seaton & Tagg	1995	X	X	-	-
28	Stafford et al.	1996a	X	-	-	-
29	Stafford et al.	1996b	X	-	-	-
30	Henthorne et al.	1997	X	X	-	-
31	Zalatan	1998	X	X	-	-
32	Dellaert et al.	1998	-	-	X	-
33	Kerstetter & Pennigton-Gray	1999	X	X	-	-
34	Martinez & Polo	1999	X	X	X	-
35	Webster & Reiss	1999	-	X	-	-
36	Gursoy	2000	X	X	-	-
37	Bohlman & Qualls	2001	-	-	-	X

38	Belch & Willis-Flurry	2002	X	-	-	-
39	Hsu & Kang	2002	X	X	X	-
40	Hsu & Kang	2003	X	X	-	-
41	Kang et al.	2003	X	X	X	-
42	Shoham & Dalakas	2003	X	-	-	-
43	Kang & Hsu	2004	-	-	-	X
44	Koc	2004	X	X	-	-
45	Litvin et al.	2004	X	-	X	-
46	Mottiar & Quinn	2004	X	-	-	-
47	Wang et al.	2004	X	-	-	-
48	Decrop	2005	X	X	-	X
49	Kang & Hsu	2005	-	-	-	X
50	Ndubisi	2005	X	X	-	-
51	Ndubisi & Koo	2005	X	X	-	-
52	Carr	2006	X	-	X	-
53	Meyer & Pennington	2006	X	X	-	-
54	Xia et al.	2006	X	X	X	-
55	Gram	2007	X	-	-	-
56	Ndubisi	2007	X	X	-	-
57	Wang et al.	2007	X	X	-	-
58	Bokek-Cohen	2008	-	-	-	X
59	Bronner & de Hoog	2008	X	-	X	X
60	Su et al.	2008	X	X	-	X
61	Beharry-Borg et al.	2009	X	X	-	X
62	Yin et al.	2009	X	X	-	-
63	Barlés et al.	2010	X	X	-	-
64	Bokek-Cohen & Lissitsa	2010	-	-	-	X
65	Kozak	2010	-	-	-	X
66	Therkelsen	2010	X	-	-	X
67	Barlés et al.	2011	X	X	-	-
68	Bokek-Cohen	2011	-	-	-	X
69	Bronner & de Hoog	2011	-	X	-	-
70	Kozak & Karadag	2012	X	X	-	-
71	Barlés et al.	2013a	X	X	X	-
72	Barlés et al.	2013b	X	X	-	X
TOTAL			60	45	16	15

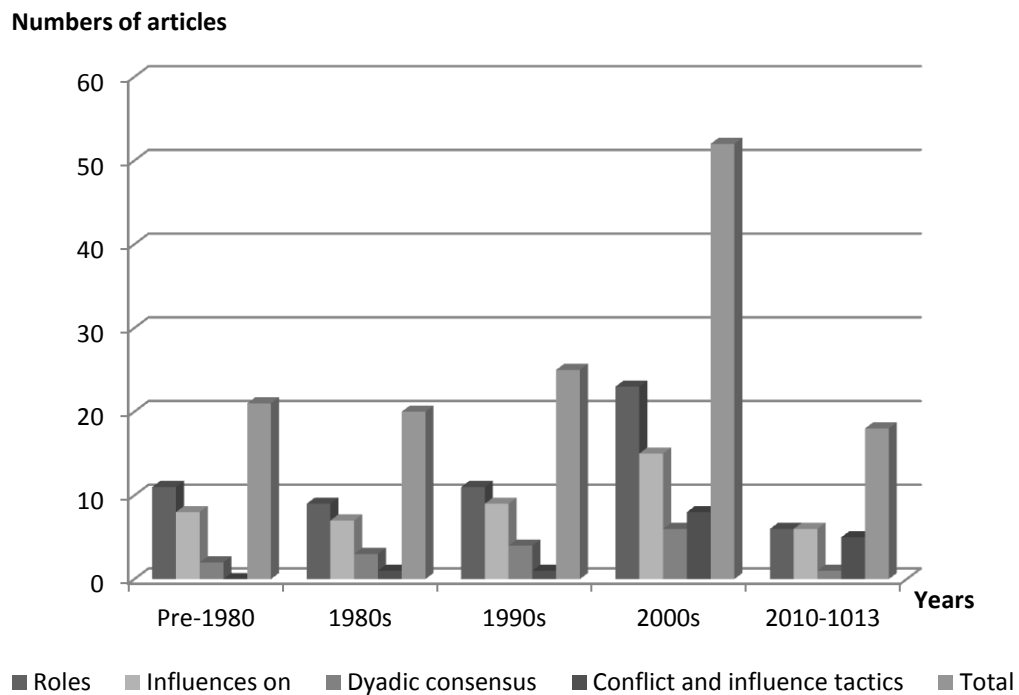
Table 1: Relationship between articles analyzed and subjects covered

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93 2.2. Classification of Subjects Studied

94 The aspect that has received most coverage in the literature on partner
95 influence on FVDM is the roles normally played by each couple member

96 according to the sub-decision and corresponding stage. Only slightly less
 97 frequently, scholars have related the power wielded by each member to
 98 different variables. A third issue is the existence of dyadic consensus on the
 99 perceived influence of the members of the couple. Currently, scholars are
 100 focused on the appearance of conflict resulting from different preferences and
 101 resolution strategies. In Figure 1, we present a graph in which the frequency of
 102 coverage of each subject in recent history is displayed.



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104 **Figure 1:** Temporal distribution of subjects covered by the studies

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106 *2.2.1. The roles of each member of the couple in each sub-decision and stage*
 107 *of FVDM.* Family decision-making has been an important subject in consumer
 108 behavior research for more than 50 years (Howard & Madrigal, 1990). The first
 109 studies focused on the role of the husband and wife (e.g., Davis, 1970; 1971;
 110 1976; Davis & Rigaux, 1974; Sharp & Mott, 1956), whereas the influence of
 111 children has been considered only recently (e.g., Darley & Lim, 1986; Ekstrom
 112 et al., 1986). The literature recognizes three types of decisions in relation to the
 113 influence wielded by each member of the couple: husband-dominant, wife-

114 dominant, and joint spousal decision. In the first two cases, the decision will be
115 dominated by the husband or wife, depending on who wields the primary
116 influence on the purchase decision. Conversely, a joint decision can be
117 produced by two types of processes. First, it can be the result of an
118 autonomous process, in which the final decision is made by one of the spouses
119 and the preferences of the other spouse have a considerable influence.
120 Alternatively, it may be the outcome of a syncretic process, in which both
121 parties participate but neither dominates (Litvin, Xu & Kang, 2004). Although
122 many works are focused on couples who are not necessarily married, the
123 literature still tends to use the terms “wife” and “husband.” To simplify the
124 language, we will use these and related terms (e.g., “spouse”) in our review
125 regardless of whether the couple are married.

126 Before the 1950s, the predominant view in consumer research was that the
127 husband, as head of the family, unilaterally makes family decisions (Sharp &
128 Mott, 1956). In contrast to these unilateral assumptions, Sharp & Mott (1956)
129 suggested that both the husband and the wife have decision-making
130 responsibilities in specific product categories. The empirical results of their
131 study provided little evidence that either spouse consistently makes unilateral
132 decisions in the investigated product categories, concluding that in the case of
133 family vacation destination, both spouses make decisions together. Nearly 20
134 years later, Cunningham & Green (1974) replicated the Sharp & Mott study,
135 finding that the probability of a joint vacation decision within a couple was even
136 greater because of the changes experienced by American families during the
137 preceding two decades.

138 Beginning in 1970, there was renewed interest in family purchasing in the
139 consumer research literature (Filiatrault & Ritchie, 1980). This resurgence was
140 manifested in a series of articles by Davis (1970; 1971; 1976). Davis (1970)
141 extended the work of Sharp & Mott by dividing family decision-making into
142 functional sub-decisions, such as decisions on when to buy, where to buy and
143 how much to spend. Davis found that when a family purchase decision is
144 broken down into these sub-decisions, the influence wielded varies not only in
145 accordance with the product category, as Sharp & Mott had found, but also
146 according to the sub-decision. Therefore, Davis concluded that it would be

147 misleading to generalize the roles of husbands and wives in family purchase
148 decisions. He noted that the conclusions regarding which spouse makes family
149 vacation decisions will depend on the sub-decision considered.

150 In another pioneering study, Davis & Rigaux (1974) empirically studied the
151 decision-making process by dividing it into three stages: problem recognition,
152 the search for external and internal information, and final decision. They justified
153 the use of the three stages rather than the classical conceptualization, which
154 included the evaluation of alternatives, because they consider this to be part of
155 the information search. Currently, this approach is the most commonly used to
156 partition the purchase process (e.g., Belch et al., 1985; Beatty & Talpade, 1994;
157 Belch & Willys-Flurry, 2002; Howard & Madrigal, 1990)..

158 Scholars who subsequently focused particularly on tourism have followed a
159 similar approach (Decrop, 2005). Jenkins (1978) was the first to replicate the
160 works of Davis in a study determining which member of the couple holds more
161 influence on concrete vacation sub-decisions. Since then, various studies of
162 partner influence on FVDM have been published, with a marked increase
163 occurring in the first decade of the 21st century.

164 *2.2.2. Influences on couples in FVDM.* Many researchers have attempted to
165 find an explanation for the varying influence of couple members in the decision-
166 making process. The variables most frequently used in the literature are
167 basically one of two types, socio-demographic and economic. The former
168 includes:

- 169 • age (e.g., Meyer & Pennington-Gray, 2006; Myers & Moncrief, 1978;
170 Nichols & Snepenger, 1988);
- 171 • the amount of time the couple has lived together (e.g., Barlés, Fraj &
172 Martínez., 2011; Myers & Moncrief, 1978);
- 173 • the presence of children (e.g., Filiatrault & Ritchie, 1980; Gursoy, 2000);
- 174 • life stage (e.g., Fodness, 1992; Gursoy, 2000);

175 • educational level (e.g., Barlés et al., 2011; Wang, Chen & Chou., 2007);
176 and

177 • family type (e.g., Gram, 2007; Green & Cunnigham, 1975; Qualls, 1982;
178 Ndubisi & Koo, 2005).

179 The most-studied economic variables are family and individual member income
180 (e.g., Barlés et al., 2011; Green & Cunnigham, 1975; Wang et al., 2007) and
181 whether the wife is employed outside the home (e.g., Barlés et al., 2010, 2011;
182 Green & Cunnigham, 1976; Martínez & Polo, 1999). To a lesser degree, travel
183 behavior variables, such as time of vacation planning, number of information
184 sources used, type of leisure activities or prior experience (e.g., Decrop., 2005;
185 Nichols & Snepenger, 1988,) and other variables related to the typology of the
186 trip made (e.g., Kang, Hsu & Wolfe, 2003, Koc, 2004) have been studied. More
187 recently, certain studies that focus on variables related to family ties were
188 published, such as cohesion (e.g., Ndubisi, 2005; 2007), or on psychographic
189 variables like values and lifestyles of women (e.g., Barlés et al., 2010; Barlés,
190 Fraj & Martínez, 2013a).

191 A key perspective on marital power was presented by Blood & Wolfe in 1960 as
192 part of their resource theory, in which they argued that power is shared by
193 husbands and wives based on the relative resources each partner contributes
194 to the family. These resources include education, income, occupational
195 prestige, knowledge, and skills (Bokek-Cohen, 2011). For example, the theory
196 suggests that the higher the income level of the husband, the greater his
197 influence in decision-making. Over time, studies of FVDM have gradually
198 broadened the traditional concept of personal resources which were primarily
199 understood as economic resources. This is the case with the qualitative study
200 by Decrop (2005), who considered other types of resources, including the time
201 availability and health of each family member. Conversely, Bokek-Cohen (2011)
202 distinguished between objective marital power, composed of real economic
203 resources, and subjective marital power, consisting of feelings such as love
204 between spouses or self-esteem. Both powers are used as the basis to explain
205 the type of strategy employed in conflict resolution. Bokek-Cohen & Lissitsa

206 (2010) also included the use of sex as a form of influence in their list of
207 resources. These studies provided an alternative view of the resource theory.

208 *2.2.3. Dyadic consensus on the extent of influence of each member of the*
209 *couple.* Further progress in this line of research was made when Davis (1970)
210 recognized the methodological problems of data reliability and validity when
211 they are obtained from only one spouse. He called into question previous
212 studies that supported obtaining answers from only one spouse because both
213 spouses agree sufficiently in their responses. In fact, in an original work,
214 Dellaert, Prodigality & Louviere (1998) concluded that although each family
215 member, including children, predicts their own influence quite accurately when
216 they make decisions about vacations, they make mistakes when they estimate
217 the others' influence.

218 However, tourism scholars have often regarded the couple as a seamless
219 decision-making unit (e.g., Howard & Madrigal, 1990; Kozak, 2010; Myers &
220 Moncrief, 1978, Nichols & Snepenger, 1988). Only 39 out of 72 studies collect
221 both responses.

222 The studies that do include both responses encountered the problem that a
223 dyadic consensus cannot always be found when these answers are compared;
224 thus, over the years, this reflection on methodology has been transformed into a
225 research subject in its own right. Heer (1963) defined dyadic spouse consensus
226 as the degree to which spouses agree or disagree on the relative influence of
227 couple members based on the perceptions of both. Because of Heer's work,
228 degree of agreement has received more attention from scholars of consumer
229 behavior (Kang & Hsu, 2005), although application to the case of family
230 vacations has been smaller.

231 As defined by Davis & Rigaux (1974), a good way of analyzing the degree of
232 agreement between spouses is to subtract the influence each one awards
233 themselves from that awarded to them by their spouse. There are different
234 cases: the first is known as "vanity," where one of the spouses overestimates
235 their influence or underestimates the influence of their spouse. In contrast, in
236 the case of "modesty," one of the members of the couple overestimates the

237 influence of the other or underestimates their own influence. If the new variable
238 equals zero, husband and wife agree; i.e., “consensus” can be assumed.

239 Regarding dyadic consensus, Kang & Hsu (2005) indicated that two
240 approaches have been used: aggregate (i.e., across units) and pair (i.e., within
241 a unit). At the aggregate level, spouse consensus is compared by taking the
242 results of the study sample for each gender. Kang & Hsu noted that not only
243 aggregate consensus but also consensus between couple members should be
244 studied, given that analysis at the aggregate level can hide individual
245 differences resulting from compensation. In fact, a great number of scholars
246 who used both approaches have reached different conclusions (Kang & Hsu,
247 2005). Regarding the few studies on dyadic consensus in couples regarding
248 FVDM, the majority adopted the aggregate approach (ten out of 16), as
249 opposed to those who conducted analysis between the pair (six out of 16). A
250 possible explanation is the higher difficulty of gathering two answers in each
251 household and then analyzing them according to the couple's characteristics.

252 Given that the recent literature, as indicated in paragraph 2.2.4., focuses on the
253 appearance of conflict in couples resulting from preferences and their resolution
254 strategies, a variation on dyadic consensus studies has been created.
255 Specifically, two recent studies, conducted by Kang & Hsu (2005) and Bronner
256 & Hoog (2008), broaden the tendency hitherto followed by the literature of
257 studying solely dyadic consensus on the perceived roles played by each
258 member. These studies address dyadic consensus both at the aggregate and at
259 the couple level, considering conflict appearance and the resolution strategies
260 used by each member of the couple, as well as the consequences this has for
261 satisfaction with the FVDM process.

262 *2.2.4. Conflict in preferences and influence tactics within couples.* Since it is
263 rare to observe a decision group without at least one member having different
264 preferences from the rest, studies have, for some time now, considered it
265 necessary to investigate conflict appearance and the use of resolution
266 strategies (Bohlman & Qualls, 2001). In the literature on family decisions in
267 general, scholars have considered this theme for decades in studies on the
268 purchase of different products, but only a few have included vacations (e.g.,

269 Belch, Belch & Sciglimpaglia, 1980; Bokek-Cohen, 2008; Sheth & Cosmas,
270 1975). As recently as 2004, with the studies of Kang & Hsu (2004, 2005),
271 vacations were considered a product to be studied specifically. These authors
272 posited the specificity of vacations because travel-related decisions involve not
273 only a destination selection but also a myriad of sub-decisions prior to and
274 during an actual trip. Therefore, many different conflicts can arise and the
275 couple can use a combination of conflict-resolution strategies.

276 However, the approach used in the case of vacations does not differ from those
277 used for other products: its purpose is to analyze the level of conflict, identify
278 the most commonly used resolution strategies, and relate both aspects to other
279 variables. Similarly, in studies focused on tourism that consider discrepancies
280 between couple members, the conflict level is usually measured in the same
281 way as it is for other products, i.e., through the perceptions of each of the
282 couple's members (e.g., Belch et al., 1980; Bronner and de Hoog, 2008). The
283 typology most commonly used by the tourism literature on conflict resolution
284 strategies was established by Sheth (1974) and Sheth & Cosmas (1975) and
285 comprises four strategic categories: problem resolution strategies, negotiating
286 strategies, persuasion strategies, and political strategies (e.g., Belch et al.,
287 1980; Kang & Hsu, 2005). Finally, the variable most related to conflict is
288 satisfaction with the process (e.g., Bronner & de Hoog, 2011, Hsu & Kang,
289 2003; Kang & Hsu, 2004; 2005; Kozak, 2010).

290 A small number of studies have focused their attention on a deeper
291 understanding of conflict originating in the process of FVDM, with newer and
292 more complex views that consider other aspects that have not been previously
293 studied. Such is the case with the Bohlmann & Qualls (2001) study, which was
294 the first to include the concept of disconfirmation in FVDM and its role in
295 individual preferences (Decrop, 2008). They defined disconfirmation as change
296 toward an opinion that is different from that held before. This study is interesting
297 because, as suggested by Bohlmann & Qualls (2001), disconfirmation can
298 explain surprising results in decision-making, not only on a family level but also
299 in groups in general. Conversely, the study of Su et al. (2008) found that
300 spouses change their opinions throughout the FVDM process to achieve

301 harmony based on perceived justice in the final decisions, which in turn
302 conditions future decisions.

303 *2.3. Study Methodologies*

304 One of the biggest difficulties that researchers face is how the influence of the
305 members of family is measured. Madrigal & Miller (1996) compared different
306 ways of measuring the influence of members of the couple in the choices of
307 destination and accommodation. They concluded that although self-reports of
308 own influence are useful indicators of "subjective reality," they are not
309 necessarily indicative of "objective reality." However, this method of data
310 collection is the most widely used in studies.

311 Moreover, regarding data processing, our review of the existing literature
312 indicates that, apart from basic analysis techniques, such as frequencies,
313 ANOVA or MANOVA (e.g., Filiatrault & Ritchie, 1980; Jenkins, 19878; Kang &
314 Hsu, 2005; Litvin et al., 2004), a variety of investigative methods have been
315 used to study topics relating to partner influence in FVDM, with multiple
316 regression analysis very common (e.g., Bohlman and Qualls, 2001; Ndubisi,
317 2005; Zalatan, 1998). To a lesser extent, other techniques have been used,
318 such as those of the pioneering author Davis (1971), who applied the multitrait-
319 multimethod (MTMM) to study spousal influence in purchase decisions. The
320 advantage of this method lies in its use of various respondents and measures,
321 which reduces the risk of relying on only one respondent in the family as a
322 measure of purchase influence (Nanda, Hsu & Bai, 2007). Martínez & Polo
323 (1999) examined the factors that determine purchase behavior using the
324 multiple correspondence technique (MCA) to observe whether there is a
325 specific purchase pattern in accordance with the gender of the spouses in the
326 household. A small number of studies have used cluster analysis, such as Kang
327 et al. (2003), segmenting visitors to a travel information center in accordance
328 with the member who has the most influence on vacation decisions. In addition,
329 Barlés et al. (2010) performed cluster analysis to develop the profiles of women
330 who make vacation decisions.

331 The scarcity of qualitative approaches is noteworthy. Observing the difficult task
332 of gathering information faced by researchers of tourist behavior, Decrop (2000)
333 defended the use of this type of approach to generate theories of consumer
334 decisions. Only five of the 72 studies (Buttle, 1994; Decrop, 2005; Gram, 2007;
335 Koc, 2004; Therkelsen, 2010) incorporate in-depth interviews and other
336 techniques allowing for qualitative research. Moreover, only four papers
337 (Bohlman & Qualls, 2001; Bronner & de Hoog, 2008; 2011; Decrop, 2005)
338 include longitudinal studies, which are necessary in tourism studies because
339 this kind of decision-making entails a long and complex process and is subject
340 to discussion.

341 Regarding the geographic aspect of the samples analyzed in this paper, the
342 research is clearly dominated by North American studies – which should not be
343 a surprise as we consider only anglophone publications – followed by European
344 ones. Conversely, there is a lack of investigation on emerging tourist markets,
345 such as the Asian markets, that are becoming important tourism consumers
346 (Swarbrooke & Homer, 2007). However, scholars have endeavored to conduct
347 cross-national comparisons (e.g., Gram, 2007; Green et al., 1983; Kandel &
348 Lesser, 1972; Stafford et al., 1996b), with the US being the market most
349 compared with others. The work performed by Litvin et al. (2004) is particularly
350 interesting, comparing the results obtained by Jenkins (1978) from a sample in
351 Ohio with samples taken from Singapore and Kansas 25 years later.

352 Analyzing the type of couples studied, we observe that toward the end of the
353 1990s, in contrast to studies conducted before this time, the authors focused on
354 couples who were not necessarily married, provided that they had children
355 together and/or were an economic decision unit (e.g., Bohlmann & Qualls,
356 2001; Martínez & Polo, 1999; Mottiar & Quinn, 2004). However, only one article,
357 by Webster and Reiss (1999), was found that addresses the differences in each
358 couple member's influence on FVDM based on whether they are married or
359 simply cohabiting.

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364 *2.4. Main Conclusions of the Studies*

365 If we were to underscore one widely shared conclusion of studies on partner
 366 influence on FVDM, it would undoubtedly be that the vacation choice has
 367 evolved during the last 30 years to become a joint decision (Bronner & de Hoog,
 368 2008). Since the first studies by Jenkins (1978), Myers & Moncrief (1978), and
 369 Filiatrault & Ritchie (1980), in which women were found to have little influence
 370 on each of the sub-decisions studied, the literature has recognized their ever-
 371 increasing influence over time, culminating in the acknowledgement of not only
 372 joint decisions but also wife-dominant decisions. In fact, when Litvin et al.
 373 (2004) reviewed seven of the ten vacation sub-decisions used by Jenkins, they
 374 found that although, at the end of the 1970s, the husband was the main
 375 decision maker and that no sub-decision was wife-dominant, 25 years later,
 376 women have assumed positions of responsibility.

377 Table 2 indicates role assignment for each of the studies, in relation to the
 378 numbering assigned to each in Table 1, according to different sub-decisions or
 379 stages. Destination choice has been the sub-decision studied most by tourism
 380 scholars, with the majority finding it to be a joint decision. Usually, authors have
 381 assumed that families travel to a single destination, ignoring the cases of those
 382 who opt for a tour. Others sub-decisions on activities, accommodation, the final
 383 decision, duration, date, initiation, restaurants, route, mode of transport, and
 384 visits to travel agencies appear to be predominantly joint decisions, although to
 385 differing degrees. The most prominent of the sub-decisions on which the
 386 husband has more influence are those related to budget and the financial
 387 aspects of vacations. Only Yin et al. (2009), studying Chinese families,
 388 concluded that women are in charge of the financial aspects of trips.

389

Stage/Sub-decision	WD	JD	HD
Activities	-	9, 40, 45, 47, 67, 71	-
Accommodation	25, 31, 47	9, 10, 40, 57, 67, 71	14, 57
Airline	-	47, 57	-
Choice of travel agency	46, 47	-	29
Collection and evaluation of information	11, 22, 23, 25, 31, 44, 46, 47, 67, 71	28, 29, 40	9, 49
Date	31	28, 29, 47, 57, 63,	9, 15, 24, 25

		71	
Destination	31	1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 14, 17, 28, 29, 40, 44, 45, 47, 57, 67, 71	25
Duration	-	2, 40, 45, 47, 62, 71	9, 57
Final decision	22	38, 40, 47, 66	49, 57
Financial and budget issues	62	71	9, 14, 19, 25, 31, 44, 49, 57
General process	22, 42, 55	5, 6, 8, 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 41, 45, 46, 54, 59, 62, 67, 71, 73	-
Generic decision to go or not to go	-	-	9, 49
Heavy material preparation	-	-	49
Initiation	22, 46, 48	28, 29, 40, 47	-
Luggage and travel arrangements	31, 44, 48, 67, 71	-	-
Presence of children	-	9	-
Reservations	46, 48	40	-
Restaurants and meals	31	47, 57, 63, 71	-
Routes and tours	-	47, 57, 63, 71	10
Shopping	31, 47, 62, 67, 71	57	29
To which beach to go	61	-	-
Tour package	44	-	-
Transport	31	9, 28, 29, 47, 57	-
Type of board	71	-	-
Type of vacation	52	-	-
Vacation travel overall control	-	-	62
Visit to the travel agency	-	28, 29	-

WD: Wife-dominant; JD: Joint; HD: Husband-dominant

390 Numbers correspond to those assigned in Table 1.

391 **Table 2:** Conclusions of articles regarding decision structure according to stage/sub-decision
392

393 Women were found to be more influential in gathering and assessing
394 information, although first Jenkins (1978) and then Decrop (2005) found this to
395 be a husband-dominant decision. After information gathering and assessment,
396 the next sub-decisions in which wife-dominant decisions most prevail are
397 purchases made before and during the trip and trip preparation in terms of more
398 practical aspects, such as luggage preparation. No study found this type of task
399 to be husband-dominant. Only Decrop (2005) assigned to the husband the
400 preparation of heavy materials necessary for the trip. These results confirm the

401 existence of role specialization. It would be unsafe to reach a general
402 conclusion regarding the other sub-decisions, as they have been researched to
403 a lesser degree, for example, the choices of vacation type, travel agency,
404 airline, or tour package.

405 Conversely, there is no consensus on the variables that can explain the
406 structure of the decision. However, this is principally results from the
407 heterogeneity of the variables included in the studies, rather than the lack of
408 agreement on any of them. Nevertheless, the possession of any type of
409 resources, such as income contributed to the household or the level of
410 education of each of the couple's members (e.g., Barlés et al., 2011; Kersteller
411 & Pennington-Gray, 1999), is the explanatory variable on which there is the
412 widest agreement among researchers, reaffirming the theory of Blood & Wolfe
413 (1960).

414 Regarding dyadic consensus on the perceived influence of the couple members
415 in the FVDM process, at both the individual and the aggregate level, a majority
416 is inclined to determine stronger vanity effect than consensus, and to a greater
417 extent, the vanity effect is stronger than the modesty effect. Specifically, the
418 works of Hsu & Kang (2002), Kang et al. (2003), and Kozak & Karadag (2012)
419 established that both male and female members of the couple believe
420 themselves to have more influence than their partner assigns to them. This
421 conclusion is also reached by Litvin et al. (2004), but specifically with regard to
422 the information search stage and solely for the Kansas sample. Belch et al.
423 (1985) and Howard & Madrigal (1990) again found that wives perceive
424 themselves to have more influence than their spouses perceive them to
425 possess. Therefore, the vanity effect has been observed to be stronger in the
426 case of wives. In contrast, Davis & Rigaux (1974) and Martínez & Polo (1999)
427 suggested that there is consensus between members of a couple.
428 Nevertheless, again in the case of disagreement, these authors state that the
429 largest discrepancies are caused by the vanity effect. Jenkins (1978) and Carr
430 (2006) are the exceptions to this trend, indicating a modesty effect for both
431 spouses and this effect just for women respectively.

432 With respect to conflict in FVDM, as the subject has only recently received
433 research attention in the case of family vacations, the literature review suggests
434 that caution must be exercised with regard to the conclusions of the few studies
435 on this subject. Noting this caveat, research shows the predominance of the use
436 of problem resolution strategies, specifically in the case of information gathering
437 and family discussion (Kang & Hsu, 2004; 2005), followed by compromise
438 strategies (Bronner & de Hoog, 2008; Kozak, 2010). As may be expected, the
439 strategy of exercising authority is not common, which is explained in large part
440 by the tendency of respondents to exhibit socially desirable behavior when
441 asked questions related to family behavior (Kang & Hsu, 2005).

442 **3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

443 Finally, our review aims to indicate a number of key areas that provide
444 opportunities for researchers in FVDM. We focus on male and female roles,
445 influences on couples, dyadic consensus on the extent of influence of each
446 member, and conflict in preferences and influence tactics within couples. We
447 contend that these areas constitute major areas in which the FVDM literature is
448 under-developed and that, therefore, warrant considerable future attention by
449 tourism scholars.

450 *3.1. Sub-decisions and stages under-developed*

451 . Despite the existence of results on which scholars essentially agree, for
452 example, those concerning destination or collection of information, scholarly
453 consensus has not been reached regarding, among other sub-decisions, which
454 partner initiates, makes the final decision, or chooses the type of
455 accommodation. However, the majority consider vacation-related decisions to
456 be joint decisions. For the sub-decisions or stages on which no clear consensus
457 has been reached or little scholarly attention has been focused, further research
458 is necessary, especially given their importance to tourism service providers
459 designing marketing campaigns.

460

461

462 3.2. *Need for studies with novel methodological approaches*

463 It is clear that there is over-reliance on quantitative approaches in tourism
464 research and most studies are cross-sectional. The principal implication is that
465 knowledge about the influence of each partner remains limited, because in
466 many cases couples are either incapable or unwilling to accurately measure it
467 (Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014). Therefore, given the complexity of measuring
468 the perception of influence as a subjective reality, it would be necessary to
469 combine quantitative and qualitative approaches in future studies, allowing for a
470 more realistic and deeper understanding of family vacation planning (Nanda et
471 al., 2007).

472 Furthermore, it would be desirable to include longitudinal studies in which the
473 perception of influence in various stages of planning the trip is evaluated.
474 Family vacation decisions are complex and planned ahead of time, unless it is a
475 routine trip. That is why the balance of influence may vary over time, for
476 example because one of the partners obtains additional information. In this
477 context, novel aspects may be identified, such as disconfirmation, the study of
478 which was pioneered by Bohlmann & Qualls (2001). In addition, studies should
479 not be limited to decision-making before the vacation, but also during the tourist
480 travel (Kang & Hsu, 2004; 2005).

481 3.3. *Limitations of the typology of selected samples in studies*

482 Given that the majority of anglophone studies are based on the travel patterns
483 of North American or European families, it would be naive to claim that these
484 results can be generalized to any location, for example, Asian countries, which
485 are currently experiencing growth in their tourist markets. Likewise, it would be
486 worth conducting more studies using samples from several countries to
487 determine the differences that exist between cultures. This is of vital importance
488 for multinational tourism providers in a world that, although globalized, exhibits
489 differences that should be known and analyzed.

490 Conversely, it would be desirable to incorporate within research the different
491 types of couples and families that are currently under-represented.
492 Undoubtedly, this new consideration of the couple's status is necessary given

493 the changes experienced by Western societies, obligating the industry and
494 tourism scholars to accommodate more modern family structures, such as one-
495 person households, stepfamilies, single-parent households, couples who live
496 together without being married, and multiperson households including
497 grandparents (Decrop, 2008).

498 3.4. *Absence of a theoretical model*

499 Unlike in other areas of consumer behavior, there is no global FVDM model to
500 provide a foundation for the presentation of hypotheses. Indeed, studies have
501 not had continuity; in general, they are isolated studies yielding results that are
502 barely comparable. Research has been conducted according to trends. For
503 example, many authors currently focus on the existence of conflicts between
504 couple members as a result of different preferences, as well as their resolution
505 strategies and the relationship between these strategies and the satisfaction
506 derived from vacations.

507 In turn, this absence of a model is in part caused by the scarcity of literature on
508 the subject; this includes poorly studied topics, such as the role of
509 disconfirmation in decision-making, and other topics that have not been
510 satisfactorily resolved, such as the identification of causes of power differences
511 between men and women in the context of FVDM.

512 **4. CONCLUSIONS**

513 In this article, we have reviewed the influence of the couple in FVDM, consulting
514 72 empirical studies conducted over the last six decades. We provide a
515 contemporary and extensive review of recent advances in the key conceptual
516 approaches that have been used for understanding partner influence in FVDM:
517 male and female roles, influences on couples, dyadic consensus on the extent
518 of influence of each member, and conflict in preferences and influence tactics
519 within couples. Finally, as part of our aim to contribute to the future research
520 agenda for the study of scholars, we complemented our review by identifying
521 and discussing several under-researched topics: sub-decisions and stages, the
522 need for new methodological approaches, limitations of the typology of selected
523 samples in studies, and the absence of a theoretical model.

524 However, our review is not without limitations. This review focuses on the roles
525 of the couple in FVDM, but we do not consider the increasing role of children
526 (Belch et al., 1985; 2005; Martensen & Grønholdt, 2008; Nickerson & Jurowski,
527 2001). It would be desirable to include them in a more comprehensive review.
528 Another important limitation is that the results of studies are compared despite
529 being extracted from very different samples and using heterogeneous
530 methodologies.

531 Given the difficulty of measuring relative influence in couples, the numerous
532 variables affecting this influence and the impossibility of isolating their effects,
533 and the difficulty of studying the FVDM process due to its variable nature over
534 time, this is a research area in which there is considerable progress to be made.

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