

Identification of the Profiles of Women Who Take Holiday Decisions

M^a José Barlés-Arizón

Elena Fraj-Andrés^{[1][2]}

Jorge Matute-Vallejo

[1] Corresponding Author: Phone: ++34 976 761000 Ext.: 4732; Fax: ++34 976 761767; E-mail: efrac@unizar.es.

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Brief autobiographical note

M^a José Barlés-Arizón is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing at the University of Zaragoza, School of Business Studies, Huesca, Spain. E-mail: mjbarles@unizar.es.

Elena Fraj-Andrés is a PhD in Business and Economic Studies and a Senior Lecturer in Marketing in the Department of Economy and Business Studies of the Business and Economics Faculty, University of Zaragoza, Spain. E-mail: efraj@unizar.es.

Jorge Matute-Vallejo is a PhD in Marketing and an Assistant Researcher in Marketing in the Department of Economy and Business Studies of the Business and Economics Faculty, University of Zaragoza, Spain. E-mail: jmatute@unizar.es.

Full international contact details:

Departamento de Economía y Dirección de Empresas, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Universidad de Zaragoza, C/ Gran Vía 2, 50005 Zaragoza, Spain.
Corresponding Author: Phone: ++34 976 761000 Ext.: 4732; Fax: ++34 976 761767.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study identifies typologies of women who take holiday decisions within the couple, characterizing their profile through their lifestyles and some socio-demographic variables.

Design/methodology/approach: The information was obtained through a survey addressed to Spanish women who were married or lived with their partner. Data were used to perform two types of analyses: scales validation and cluster analysis.

Findings: Three different groups have been found depending on the importance the women give to pre- and during-holiday decisions. These groups present specific socio-demographic characteristics, interests and opinions. However, findings reveal the need for further research into women's lifestyles as an explanatory variable.

Research implications: This information will contribute not only to the academic knowledge but will also help tourist managers to create competitive offers. It will also allow managers to implement more efficient promotional campaigns with the aim of attracting female tourists.

Originality/value: A classification of women, based on their holiday decisions, their lifestyles (Activities, Interest and Opinions, AIO scale) and on some socio-demographic variables (age, time living with the partner, children, occupation, level of studies, personal and family income, etc.), is provided in order to characterise them.

Keywords: Holiday decision process, lifestyles, activities, interests and opinions, female tourist, cluster analysis

Article Type: Empirical paper

1.- INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a key sector in the Spanish economy. It represents 10.8 percent of the Gross Domestic Product and provides work for nearly 15 percent of the population^[i]. The sector is characterised by its dynamism. However, there is one fact that never changes, the Spanish tourist likes travelling with his/her family^[ii]. So, the family, as a decision-making unit, is an important object of study within the tourist environment.

In recent decades, various social, political and economic changes have taken place and, nowadays, family holidays are shorter and more frequent and the roles that each family member plays in the holiday decision-making process have also evolved (Kang and Hsu, 2005). The incorporation of women into the labour market, the decrease in the number of births per woman and the growing number of female university graduates are some of the changes that characterise today's society^[iii]. Therefore, it seems interesting to analyse how these changes affect the role that each family member plays in the holiday decision-making process, especially the woman's role as a member of the basic decision unit within the family (Hawkins *et al.*, 2004).

In academic research, socio-demographic variables have been widely used to classify tourists. However, in recent years, researchers have also considered psychographic variables to understand tourist behaviour (Bigné *et al.*, 2005; Gross *et al.*, 2008). Lifestyles are a psychographic variable which offers important information to researchers. Therefore, it would be interesting to determine the relationships between holiday decisions and the lifestyle of those who take them. Nevertheless, although it seems clear that lifestyles and tourist consumption are related, there is no literature that separately analyses the role of this variable in women as decision makers in tourism behaviour. This study will try to fill that gap by exploring the profiles of women in tourism decisions.

Thus, the objective of this work is to characterise groups of women^[iv] that take different holiday decisions, differentiating them according to their lifestyles and some socio-demographic variables. In a highly competitive market like the Spanish one, being able to offer an attractive tourist destination requires a great understanding of the process that consumers follow when they have to decide about where and how to spend their leisure time and knowing the variables that best explain the tourist's profile. This information will contribute not only to the academic knowledge but will also help tourist managers to create competitive and differentiated offers.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. First, we will carry out a review of the literature about family holiday decisions and women's tourist decisions. Second, we will describe the methodology used. Third, we will comment on the main results obtained from the analyses. Lastly, we will draw conclusions and discuss the limitations and future research lines.

2.- REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1.- Family holiday decisions

Most of the decisions that consumers take as tourists are not independent but complex decisions which entail choosing multiple, interrelated elements in a temporal sequence (Dellaert *et al.*, 1998). Three steps can be identified in this process: the decision to travel or not, decisions taken before the trip, and decisions taken during the trip. Decisions before travelling refer to choosing the destination, accommodation, travel agency, transport, season and duration (Fesenmaier, 1995). Decisions taken during the holidays include attractions or special places to visit, routes, expenses, where to eat or stay, etc. (Dellaert *et al.*, 1998). Zalatan (1998) presented a similar classification and distinguished four decision categories:

initial tasks of the trip, financing, pre-departure and destination. On the whole, although the grouping is different, the decisions are the same.

In the family decision-making process, the literature shows that holiday decisions are usually taken jointly by the couple (Cunningham and Green, 1974; Myers and Moncrieff, 1978; Ritchie and Filiatrault, 1980; Martínez and Polo, 1999). However, when different holiday sub-decisions are considered, it is observed that the husband's and the wife's influences vary (Davis, 1970). Whereas husbands decide about information search, the duration of the trip, the dates and expenses (Jenkins, 1979; Ritchie and Filiatrault, 1980) or about routes, maps, car servicing, money and insurance (Decrop, 2005), wives have an important role in previous phases of the holiday decisions (Mottiar and Quinn, 2004), like the choice of destination and the search for information about accommodation, shopping and the choice of travel agency (Zalatan, 1998; Gursoy, 2000; Decrop, 2005).

Furthermore, the influence of each member of the couple in family holiday decisions has been proved to be different depending on some socio-demographic aspects. For instance, the couple's age and the number of children are critical in the role that each partner plays in this process (Myers and Moncrieff, 1978; Gursoy, 2000), while the family's life cycle stage (Ritchie and Filiatrault, 1980) and their economic resources (Nanda *et al.*, 2006) also determine holiday decisions.

In the tourism sector, the information obtained from socio-demographic variables can be complemented by considering other variables such as lifestyles. Van Raaij and Francken (1984) suggested that lifestyles could explain the behaviour in the holiday decision-making process. As Scott and Parfitt (2004) affirm, holiday decisions represent lifestyles purchases, communicate values and create new tourism typologies. Consequently, this psychographic variable could determine the choice of holiday activities (Pennington-Gray *et al.*, 2003) as well as the final destination (Naylor and Bardi, 2002). Therefore, any information on

lifestyles that tourist managers can gather will facilitate the design and the implementation of the firm's strategy, so that it can be aligned with the market's needs and expectations (Gilbert and Warren, 1995; Vyncke, 2002). To date, the most widely used methodology in tourism-related studies has been AIO, although its relationship with holiday decisions taken by women has not yet been addressed in the literature.

Psychographic variables are useful for segmenting the tourist market since they have been proved to be related to certain aspects like motives and travel activities (Mazanec and Zins, 1994), type of tourist destination (Silverberg *et al.*, 1996), frequency of visits to museums and art galleries (Todd and Lawson, 2001) or to establish distinctions between travellers on short and long holidays (González, *et al.* 2000). González (2005) studied lifestyles and showed their explanatory value by applying them to the study of cultural tourism behaviour. This author found that the AIO methodology was optimum in tourist segmentation.

Following these ideas, this work will analyse whether there are different groups of women defined by different holiday decisions and characterised by some lifestyles and socio-demographic variables, an issue that has not been previously considered in the literature.

2.2.-The tourist behaviour of women

Examining the existing literature, it can be observed that several studies about the role of women in tourism decisions within the family were conducted during the 80's (Nichols and Snepenger, 1988; Van Raaij, 1986). The results obtained varied depending on variables such as: the place of origin of the family, the roles the members of the family play and the phase of the life cycle. Nichols *et al.* (1988) compared men and women's travel patterns and found that women preferred shorter trips, having fewer sports activities on their journeys and spending less money. Mieczkowski (1990) and McArthur (1999) concluded that, whereas women

sought cultural and educational experiences when travelling, men looked for action and adventure. Greathouse *et al.*, (1992) found that, in the choice of a hotel, expectations varied according to gender. Additionally, some demographic variables such as age (Hawes, 1988; Leeming and Tripp, 1994), educational level (Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter, 2001), income and being married or not (Chiang and Jogaratnam, 2006) have been useful for explaining female tourist behaviour.

Studies that focus on gender as an explanatory variable of tourism decisions are scarce. Most recent studies concentrate on exploring women's peculiarities in their search for information (Kim *et al.*, 2007) and their different perceptions about tourism services (Carr, 1999; Westwood, Pritchard and Morgan, 2000).

The present study will try to contribute a new dimension of study: a typology of women based on their role in the holiday decision-making process and on several lifestyle and socio-demographic variables. Accordingly, we will try to characterise the female tourist when she travels with her family (Deem, 1986; Green *et al.*, 1987; Henderson and Braleschki, 1991; Shaw, 1992).

3.- METHODOLOGY

3.1.- Data and Measurements

This study is part of a wider-ranging research line focused on drawing a comparison between men's and women's roles in product/services purchase decisions in a north-eastern region of Spain (Aragón). The target population of the present study consisted of women who were married or living with a partner. To collect the data, a questionnaire was designed and hand-delivered to a convenient sample during the last quarter of 2006. The use of a convenient sample is justified by two reasons: first, it is a frequent sample in this type of

studies (Zalatan, 1998; Koc, 2004; Kang and Hsu, 2005); and second, it is difficult to find couples willing to collaborate and fill in such a large double questionnaire that analyses delicate and private matters like who decides about holidays and their interests, opinions and activities. The “snowball method”, controlling the age variable (under 35, between 35-55 and over 55), was employed to obtain the surveys. A couple was required to collaborate and give out 15 pairs of questionnaires to couples who were their friends, relatives or workmates. A total of 743 pairs of questionnaires were distributed and, after three months and two rounds of distribution/reception, the fieldwork was over. 328 answered questionnaires were returned, of which 300 were valid. The others were discarded because their information was incomplete. Before designing and delivering the questionnaire, two pre-tests were conducted in order to avoid problems with any of the items included.

Moving on to the main characteristics of the sample, it is observed that most of the women work out of home (87%), have higher education (55%), are between 31 and 60 (82%), have one or two children and have been living with their partner for around 10 years (Table 1). The fit between the demographic characteristics of the subject population of the study and the sample was verified. Nevertheless, the sample’s profile is a consequence of the type of sampling, which involves some loss of control over how the questionnaire is answered (Edmonston, 1997). In this respect, the high educational level of the sample might bias the results. However, it is important to point out that, according to the Institute of Tourism Studies in its 2007 report^v, the educational level is one of the determining factors of tourist behaviour, which may influence the high response rate in this group.

Although the questionnaire was tested twice, it is likely to be too long for elderly people, people with low level of studies or not very sensitive to the usefulness of this type of studies. These difficulties led us to discard a reduced number of questionnaires to guarantee the representativeness of the sample (Malhotra, 2004).

Table 1. Sample description (N = 300)

| Socio-demographic variables | | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Working out of home | Yes | 261 | 86.9 |
| | No | 39 | 13.1 |
| Age | Under 30 | 41 | 13.7 |
| | Between 31-45 | 181 | 60.3 |
| | Between 46-60 | 67 | 22.3 |
| | Over 60 | 11 | 3.7 |
| Educational level | Without studies | 2 | 0.7 |
| | Primary School | 34 | 11.4 |
| | Secondary School | 99 | 33.0 |
| | University or above | 165 | 54.9 |
| Personal Income (euros) | Less than 1000 | 79 | 26.3 |
| | Between 1000-2000 | 179 | 59.6 |
| | Between 2001-3000 | 37 | 12.2 |
| | Between 3000-4000 | 3 | 1.2 |
| | Over 4000 | 2 | 0.8 |
| Occupation | Employee | 143 | 47.6 |
| | Own business | 26 | 8.4 |
| | Professional | 3 | 1.0 |
| | Business woman | 9 | 3.0 |
| | Civil servant | 70 | 23.3 |
| | Other | 10 | 3.4 |
| Family Income (euros) | Less than 1000 | 4 | 1.3 |
| | Between 1000-2000 | 42 | 14 |
| | Between 2001-3000 | 120 | 40 |
| | Between 3000-4000 | 80 | 26.7 |
| | Over 4000 | 46 | 15.3 |
| Time living with the partner | Less than 5 years | 80 | 26.6 |
| | Between 5 - 10 years | 72 | 23.9 |
| | Between 11- 15 years | 50 | 16.6 |
| | Between 16 - 20 years | 27 | 9 |
| | More than 20 years | 71 | 23.9 |
| Children | Yes | 204 | 68 |
| | No | 96 | 32 |
| Children under 6 | None | 203 | 67.8 |
| | One | 64 | 21.4 |
| | Two | 33 | 10.8 |
| | Three | 0 | 0 |
| Children between 6 and 16 | None | 220 | 73.2 |
| | One | 58 | 19.3 |
| | Two | 19 | 6.4 |
| | Three | 3 | 1 |
| Children over 16 | None | 227 | 75.9 |
| | One | 35 | 11.5 |
| | Two | 29 | 9.5 |
| | Three | 6 | 2 |
| | More than three | 3 | 1 |

As mentioned above, the variables considered in this study are holiday decisions, women's lifestyles and socio-demographic aspects. Bearing in mind the characteristics of family holidays in Spain, we followed the proposals of Kang *et al.* (2003), Wang *et al.* (2004)

and Litving *et al.*, (2004) to select the different holiday sub-decisions to be included in the study. Consequently, the following aspects were finally included in the questionnaire: setting holiday dates, duration, budget, information search, destination, accommodation, type of board, ticket purchase, packing, places to eat, places to visit and activities to do at the destination. A 5-point Likert scale was used, where 1 means “a totally male decision” and 5 “a totally female decision”.

Lifestyles were measured through the Activities, Interest and Opinion (AIO) scale developed by González (1998) for the Spanish case from Plummer’s work (1974). As cited above, this measurement has been widely employed in the literature. Again, a 5-point Likert scale was used, where 1 corresponded to “unimportant” and 5 to “very important” for activities items; for interest items, 1 referred to “uninterested” and 5 to “very interested” and, finally, 1 corresponded to “completely disagree” and 5 to “completely agree” for opinion items.

3.2.- Analyses and Results

The data obtained were analysed through two statistical techniques. First, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis to validate the scales that measured holiday decisions and lifestyles. Second, a cluster analysis was carried out to obtain different groups according to women’s holiday decisions. These groups were characterised by analysing the lifestyles and socio-demographic variables. We also carried out a t-test of means to check potential differences among the women that take different holiday decisions.

The exploratory factor analysis revealed the existence of two factors that shape the holiday decisions variable. The first one consists of five items related to pre-holiday decisions (information for holidays, deciding about destination and accommodation, type of board and buying tickets/holidays) and, consequently, received the name of *Decisions Before Holidays*

(DBH). The second one gathers two items referring to decisions taken during holidays (places to visit and activities to do) and received the name of *Decisions During Holidays* (DDH) (Table 2). This result confirms other results from previous works that find similar dimensions (Fessenmaier 1995; Dellaert *et al.*, 1998).

Table 2. Holiday Decisions Factor Analysis

| Items | Factor Loading | | Statistical Parameters |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| | DBH ($\alpha = 0.768$) | DDH ($\alpha = 0.713$) | |
| Seeking information for a holiday | 0.592 | --- | KMO = 0.749 Bartlett $\chi^2 = 684.833$ Sig. = 0.000 E. V. = 63.01% Eigenvalues > 1 |
| Deciding about destination | 0.606 | --- | |
| Deciding about accommodation | 0.834 | --- | |
| Deciding about type of board | 0.830 | --- | |
| Buying tickets/holiday | 0.618 | ---- | |
| Deciding what places to visit | -- | 0.859 | |
| Deciding about what activities to do | -- | 0.815 | |

Note 1: α = Cronbach's alpha; KMO = Kaiser –Meyer- Olkin; E. V. = Extracted Variance.

Note 2: DBH = Decisions Before Holidays; DDH = Decisions During Holidays.

The activities subscale gathers two dimensions (OCA and ICA), with four and two items, respectively: OCA refers to outdoor cultural activities and ICA to indoor cultural activities (Table 3). Focusing on the interest subscale, the factor analysis revealed the existence of two dimensions (ICSP and INDP) with three and four items, respectively. ICSP shows women's interest in cultural and scientific programmes, while INDP shows women's interest in news and debate programmes (Table 4).

Finally, the opinion subscale's items loaded into seven factors (Table 5). Professional Opinion (PO) collects four items on women's professional success related to their self-fulfilment. The increasing presence of women in the labour market in Spain and Aragón over the last decade may be the reason behind the appearance of this factor. Much of the advance in women's liberation stems from their incorporation into the labour market. This could

explain the importance attached to the fact that they feel valued both by themselves and by others.

Table 3. Factorial analysis of the scale of AIO: Activities subscale

| Items | Factor Loading | | Statistical Parameters |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| | OCA ($\alpha = 0.775$) | ICA ($\alpha = 0.524$) | |
| Going to the cinema | 0.770 | ----- | KMO = 0.797 Bartlett $\chi^2 = 458.836$ Sig. = 0.000 E.V. = 63.53% Eigenvalues > 1 |
| Visiting exhibitions/monuments | 0.789 | ----- | |
| Attending concerts, ballet and theatre | 0.730 | ----- | |
| Visiting beauty spots | 0.710 | ----- | |
| Reading magazines or newspapers | ----- | 0.853 | |
| Reading books | ----- | 0.754 | |

Note1: See note 1 in Table 2.

Note2: OCA = Outdoor Cultural Activities, ICA = Indoor Cultural Activities.

Table 4. Factorial analysis of the scale of AIO: Interest subscale

| Items | Factor Loading | | Statistical Parameters |
|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| | ICSP ($\alpha = 0.700$) | INDP ($\alpha = 0.664$) | |
| Theatre | 0.629 | ----- | KMO = 0.719 Bartlett $\chi^2 = 500.307$ Sig. = 0.000 E.V. = 57.28% Eigenvalue > 1 |
| Documentaries | 0.835 | ----- | |
| Cultural-scientific | 0.843 | ----- | |
| News | ----- | 0.797 | |
| Debates | ----- | 0.559 | |
| Current affairs | ----- | 0.710 | |
| Interviews | ----- | 0.582 | |

Note1: See note 1 to Table 2.

Note2: ICSP = Interest in cultural- scientific programmes, INDP = Interest in news and debates programmes.

Traditional Opinion (TO) consists of four items related to women's opinions about family care, home and tradition. As such, it could be considered a priori as the opposite of the previous factor, since it refers to a more traditional, practical and religious woman who likes taking care of her family. Although the gradual gender equality process may be behind the opinions gathered in the PO factor, it is not a closed process and it coexists with the

traditional opinions collected in the TO factor. Therefore, women with similar demographic characteristics may have very different opinions.

Materialistic Opinion (MO), made up of two items, represents a materialistic and superficial vision of life, showing that the important thing is to have money and enjoy it. Social Justice Opinion (SJO) includes three items about the importance that women give to social justice, also including an environmental concern.

The three items of True versus Superficial Relationship Opinion (TSO) reflect, on the one hand, the positive value of family and friends and, on the other hand, the negative value of becoming a famous person. Risk Aversion Opinion (RAO) gathers two items related to women who are risk adverse, and that show concern for situations which involve uncertainty or situations that produce worries and are difficult to control, such as children's illnesses. Finally, Conservative Social Worry Opinion (CSWO) presents two items on women's worries about society, both from the perspective of order and security and from the perspective of personal contribution, through work, to the society where they live (Table 5).

After validating the scales, a cluster analysis was performed in order to identify different profiles of women that take holiday decisions. In this analysis, the two factors previously obtained from the holiday decision scale (DBH and DDH) were included as active variables. Accordingly, it will be possible to observe the occurrence of some differences between women that take decisions before the trip and those that take decisions during the trip. Activities (OCA, ICA), Interests (ICSP, INDP) and Opinions (PO, TO, MO, SJO, TSO, RAO, CSWO) dimensions obtained in the exploratory factor analysis were employed as passive variables. These variables, together with some socio-demographic ones, will describe and characterise the different groups identified. We finally obtained three clusters, the first formed by 35% of the individuals, the second by 52.3% and the third by 12.66%.

Table 5. Factorial analysis of the scale of AIO: Opinions subscale

| PROFESSIONAL OPINION (PO) ($\alpha = 0.793$) | Factor loading | Statistical Parameters KMO = 0.696; Bartlett $\chi^2 =$ 1377,989; Sig. = 0,000; E.V. = 63,68%; Eigenvalue > 1 |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Having an exciting occupation | 0.734 | |
| Having professional success | 0.858 | |
| Creating something that endures | 0.681 | |
| Getting promotion as a result of professional recognition | 0.681 | |
| TRADITIONAL OPINION (TO) ($\alpha = 0.605$) | Factor loading | |
| When someone gives me a present, I like it to be useful | 0.530 | |
| One must go to church on Sunday | 0.646 | |
| I like to work at home and take care of my family | 0.705 | |
| I like to be at home doing the housework | 0.731 | |
| MATERIALISTIC OPINION (MO) ($\alpha = 0.674$) | Factor loading | |
| I like to earn a lot of money | 0.793 | |
| I like to be able to pay for all my whims | 0.758 | |
| SOCIAL JUSTICE OPINION (SJO) ($\alpha = 0.626$) | Factor loading | |
| Having ideals and fighting for a fairer society | 0.691 | |
| Fighting injustice | 0.719 | |
| When I acquire a product, I keep in mind the effect of its consumption on the environment | 0.683 | |
| TRUE VERSUS SUPERFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS OPINION (TSO) ($\alpha = 0.626$) | Factor loading | |
| To become a famous person | -0.653 | |
| To have good friends | 0.728 | |
| To have a happy and united family | 0.728 | |
| RISK AVERSION OPINION (RAO) ($\alpha = 0.546$) | Factor loading | |
| If my children are sick, I drop everything to take care of them | 0.805 | |
| I am worried about uncertainty | 0.719 | |
| CONSERVATIVE SOCIAL WORRY OPINION (CSWO) ($\alpha = 0.279$) | Factor loading | |
| I work to render services to society | 0.757 | |
| The police must maintain order at any price | 0.613 | |

Note1: See note 1 to Table 2.

To guarantee the differences among the values that each group of women presents in each of the two dimensions of holiday decisions (DBH: before arriving at destination and DDH: during the stay), we applied the Snedecor F-test^[vi]. The results, shown in Table 6, confirm the differences in the mean values of the two factors in the clusters obtained.

We also apply a t-test analysis and the Chi-square statistic in order to characterise the groups identified. In the Annex, the socio-demographic profile of the three clusters is displayed. Some of the main features of each cluster will be described.

Table 6. Differences between the conglomerate centres (K-means Clustering Analysis)

| | Cluster 1 | Cluster 2 | Cluster 3 | F-Snedecor | Sig. |
|------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| DBH | 3.70 | 2.82 | 4.05 | 238.705 | 0.000 |
| DDH | 3.22 | 2.90 | 4.37 | 201.755 | 0.000 |

Note: DBH = Decisions Before Holidays; DDH = Decisions During Holidays.

Cluster 1, denominated as “women who most participate in pre-holiday decisions”, is formed by 105 women. This group is characterised by: having greater family incomes than the other groups; including the youngest women; having children under 16 (Table 7)^[vii] and having lived less time with their partner. Women in this group play an important role in the pre-holiday decision-making process, searching for information, choosing the destination and the accommodation and taking decisions about ticket purchase and how to travel. The t-test shows that there is a lower degree of influence of the Materialistic Opinion (MO) than in cluster 2 (Table 8), meaning that they do not attach importance to money and whims.

Table 7. Significant relationships between clusters and children’s age

| | With children under 16 | With children over 16 |
|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cluster 1 | 83.7%* | 16.3%** |
| Cluster 2 | 74.5% | 25.5% |
| Cluster 3 | 60.5%** | 39.5%* |

Note: * means direct relationship, ** means reverse relationship.

The motivations that lead this group to choose a particular destination may have to do with the image or level of attractiveness that the chosen destination holds (Yoon and Uysal, 2005). These women may travel to escape from their routine and to live new experiences, so they might prefer adventure, rural and gastronomic trips, a cruise or a journey to some exotic destination. Moreover, the satisfaction that these women obtain from their journey will

depend on the decisions previously taken. This tourist profile knowledge helps tourism managers to promote the attributes of the destination that best suit this cluster.

Table 8. T-Test analysis: Significant relationships between clusters and AIO factors

| | Cluster (a) | Cluster (b) | Levene's Significance | Means Differences (a-b) | Bilateral Significance |
|--|-------------|-------------|--|-------------------------|------------------------|
| MATERIALISTIC OPINION (MO) | 1 | 2 | 0.239 > 0,05: Variances are assumed to be different | -0.299* | 0.036 |
| | | 3 | | -0.281 | 0.371 |
| SOCIAL JUSTICE OPINION | 2 | 1 | 0.045 < 0,05: Variances are assumed to be equal | 0.149 | 0.437 |
| | | 3 | | 0.566* | 0.004 |
| INTEREST IN CULTURAL-SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMS (ICSP) | 2 | 1 | 0.504 > 0,05: Variances are assumed to be different | 0.125 | 0.750 |
| | | 3 | | 0.502* | 0.030 |

Note1: (a) = cluster of reference; (b) = clusters to compare with the cluster of reference.

Note2: Materialistic opinion (MO): * significant at 5% level. If variances are different then Dunnet, Gemes-Howell's T3 and Dunnet's C contrasts are applied. If they are < 0.05 then there is a significant relationship.

Note3: Interest in Cultural-scientific programmes (ICSP) and Social Justice Opinion (SJO): If variances are equal then Tukey's HSD contrast is applied and also, Scheffé, DMS, Bonferroni, Sidak, Gabriel and Hochberg's contrasts are < 0.05 for relationships with *, and > 0.05 for the rest.

Cluster 2 presents the lowest scores for both types of holiday decisions. It includes 157 women that are defined as “women little involved in pre- and during-holiday decisions”. They are older than the women in cluster 1 and younger than those in cluster 3 and they have been living with their partner longer than those in cluster 1, but less time than those in cluster 3. Moreover, these women have a lower family income than the women that belong to cluster 3. Therefore, it can be said that cluster 2 is between clusters 1 and 3 with respect to the age, time with their partner and income variables. The t-test analysis shows that the women in cluster 2 prefer cultural-scientific programmes and show a more positive attitude to social justice than women in cluster 3 (Table 8). The motivations that lead this group to choose a particular type of holiday are less clear because they depend on the decisions of others. These women may prefer a package holiday because they would not need to take any special decision and

everything would be arranged and scheduled. As they have a favourable opinion about social and environmental issues, cultural and environmental holidays could be a good option for them. This group is interested in cultural-scientific programmes, so media like scientific journals, newspapers and TV could be the best way to reach them.

Finally, cluster 3 is formed by 38 women who are the oldest, have been living with their partner for the longest time and whose family income is the lowest. The cluster also contains more mothers with children over 16 (Table 7). We have defined this group as "women who most participate in during-holiday decisions". As mentioned before, cluster 3 presents lower scores than cluster 2 in their interest in cultural-scientific programmes (ICSP) and in the social justice opinion (SJO) factors. These women do not show any interest in activities like watching documentary and debates programmes and prefer to do other activities at home. The motivations for the women in this group to travel to a specific destination are based mostly on intangible aspects linked to emotional factors (the desire for rest, health and relaxation, social and family relationships, etc.) (Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Therefore, they might prefer holiday destinations like seaside resorts and hotels with access to a spa. This kind of tourist would be more receptive to tourist information through travel brochures.

4.- CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study suggest that it is possible to identify a typology of women depending on the moment they take holiday decisions: decisions before the holidays and decisions during the holidays. It has been shown that there are three groups of women that have different lifestyles and socio-demographic characteristics. Although the tourist literature has paid much attention to these variables, we have found no work that classifies the female tourist according to the kind of holiday decisions she takes. Previous research on female behaviour in tourism has mainly centred on women as workers in the sector (Cánoves *et al.*,

2004; McKenzie, 2007). The role of women as tourists has received less attention in the literature (Carr, 1999; Westwood *et al.*, 2000; Kim *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, it is important to analyse the role of each family member and, more specifically, the role of women in the holiday decision-making process. Despite the numerous models of holiday decisions, most of them address the process of individual decisions (Gilbert, 1991) and few of them consider the fact that it is a social activity which includes family, friends and others (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005; Decrop, 2005).

Our findings provide sufficient empirical evidence for us to affirm that socio-demographic variables are more determining than psychographic ones to characterize the groups identified. This is in line with previous works that found socio-demographic aspects appropriate for the analysis of female tourist behaviour (Hawes, 1988; Leeming and Tripp, 1994; Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter, 2001; Chiang and Jogaratnam, 2006). However, lifestyles, in spite of being a widely used variable in the literature to segment the tourism market (Schull and Cropmton, 1983; Mazanec and Zins, 1994; Todd and Lawson, 2001; González *et al.*, 2000; Thyne *et al.*, 2006; Green *et al.*, 2006), are found to be less relevant for characterizing the groups identified in this study. The results show the need for further study of lifestyles as an explanatory variable. The reason for this could be the use of the AIO scale and the sampling method.

This study has significant implications for tourist managers. Its main contribution is to identify three groups of female tourists. The first group is named: “women who most participate in pre-holiday decisions”, the second: “women little involved in pre- and during-holiday decisions” and the third: “women who most participate in during-holiday decisions”. The first group is of special interest because it determines the type of holidays the family will have. Firms and tourism organisations can aim their messages at this group of young females with a short period of living together, an acceptable income level, with no children or very

young children and with not very materialistic ideals. These women have an influence on holiday information search, the choice of destination and type of board, as well as ticket purchase and reservations. Consequently, firms' communicational strategies about destinations, accommodation and travel agencies, both real and virtual, have to consider these characteristics.

On the other hand, women in the third cluster have to be considered by service providers when they have already arrived at their respective holiday's destinations, since these companies may determine decisions on places to visit and activities to do. In this case, the communication policy of tourism firms must consider middle-aged women, either married or having a long term partnership, with a low income and who enjoy out-of-home activities. For this group, traditional tourist information tools like brochures or catalogues would be more appropriate and should be available at the destination.

It is more difficult to make recommendations for the intermediate cluster, and they reveal the need for a deeper analysis of the variables that influence the holiday decision-making process.

On the whole, the difference between pre- and during-holiday decisions is important for tourist managers in order to design adequate marketing strategies for each case. Managers should first persuade these groups to visit their tourist destination through different mass media (TV, radio, billboard) in collaboration with travel agencies. Once tourists are at the destination offered by the managers, a new type of communication should begin. During this second period, hotel staff is important to inform and advise tourists about the activities available (hotel services, sightseeing, museums, restaurants, shopping, etc.).

Our findings are not free from limitations. They were obtained from a specific geographical area at a specific moment in time and using specific measurements. The fact that

we only considered women who were married or had been living with a partner means that we must be cautious about extrapolating our results. Furthermore, the high number of women with university studies may bias the results. Future research projects could attempt to establish to what extent the educational level affects the influence of women on holiday decisions. Another future research line of great interest could be to observe how demographic features and family lifestyles affect the degree of influence of children on holiday decisions.

Consequently, further research is required in these issues for a better understanding of the holiday purchase behaviour of families in general and of women in particular.

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ANEXX- Socio-demographic characteristics of the clusters

| Socio-demographic Variables | | C1 | C2 | C3 |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Working out of the home | Yes | 13.6% | 9.6% | 26.3% |
| | No | 86.4% | 90.4% | 73.7% |
| Occupation | Employee | 55.7% | 59.2% | 29.6% |
| | Own business | 9.1% | 7% | 25.9% |
| | Professional | 1.1% | 1.4% | 0% |
| | Business woman | 3.4% | 2.8% | 7.4% |
| | Civil servant | 25% | 26.8% | 33.3% |
| | Other | 5.7% | 2.8% | 3.7% |
| Personal Income (euros) | Less than 1000 | 26.4% | 24.8% | 33.3% |
| | Between 1000-2000 | 58.6% | 62.4% | 48.1% |
| | Between 2001-3000 | 11.5% | 12.1% | 0% |
| | Between 3000-4000 | 2.3% | 0.7% | 0% |
| | Over 4000 | 1.1% | 0% | 3.7% |
| Educational level | Without studies | 0% | 0.6% | 2.6% |
| | Primary School | 10.7% | 10.3% | 18.4% |
| | Secondary School | 36.9% | 32.1% | 26.3% |
| | University or above | 52.4% | 57.1% | 52.6% |
| Age | Under 30 | 16.5% | 14.7% | 2.6%** |
| | Between 31-45 | 63.1% | 58.3% | 60.5% |
| | Between 46-60 | 17.5% | 25% | 23.7% |
| | Over 60 | 2.9% | 1.9% | 13.2% |
| Children | Yes | 36.5% | 31.4% | 21.1% |
| | No | 63.5% | 68.6% | 78.9% |
| Number of children per woman | None | 36.5% | 31.4% | 21.1% |
| | One | 25% | 27.5% | 28.9% |
| | Two | 32.7% | 32.7% | 36.8% |
| | Three or more | 5.8% | 8.5% | 13.2% |
| Children under 6 | None | 68.3% | 67.3% | 68.4% |
| | One | 21.2% | 20.3% | 26.3% |
| | Two | 10.6% | 12.4% | 5.3% |
| Children between 6 and 16 | None | 73.1% | 73.2% | 73.7% |
| | One | 19.2% | 20.3% | 15.8% |
| | Two | 7.7% | 4.6% | 10.5% |
| | Three or more | 0% | 2% | 0% |
| Children over 16 | None | 83.7% | 74.5% | 60.5% |
| | One | 4.8% | 14.4% | 18.4% |
| | Two | 8.7% | 9.2% | 13.2% |
| | Three or more | 2.9% | 2% | 7.9% |
| Time together with the partner | Less than 10 | 29% | 27.6% | 16.2% |
| | Between 11 and 20years | 26% | 25% | 13.5% |
| | More than 20 | 45% | 47.4% | 70.3% |
| Family Income (euros) | Less than 1000 | 2% | 0.6% | 2.7% |
| | Between 1000-2000 | 13% | 15.5% | 13.5% |
| | Between 2001-3000 | 41% | 36.1% | 62.2% |
| | Between 3000-4000 | 29% | 30.3% | 10.8% |
| | Over 4000 | 15% | 17.4% | 10.8% |

Note: C1=women who most participate in pre-holiday decisions; C2 = women little involved in pre- and during-holiday decisions; C3 = women who most participate in during-holiday decisions.

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- [i] Data from the web-page: www.ine.es (Sept. 2008), and from the Active Population Survey (second term of 2008).
- [ii] According to the Sociological Research Center (CSI), in their barometer of June 2007, 68.3% of Spaniards spend their holidays with their family. (<http://www.cis.es>; Sept. 2008).
- [iii] According to the Woman's Institute from the Web-page: <http://www.migualdad.es/mujer/mujeres/cifras/index.htm>. Statistics: Women in figures 2008 (Sept. 2008).
- [iv] In this work, terms like "woman" and "wife" will be used indistinctly due to our study context.
- [v] Figures of Spanish Tourism, 2007, latest data published (consulted 25/04/09)
<http://www.iet.tourspain.es/informes/documentacion/publicaciones/TurisCifras2007Esp.pdf>
- [vi] In the K-means clustering analysis, the tests F only should be utilized with a descriptive purpose, since the conglomerates have been chosen to maximize the differences between each pair of the cases.
- [vii] Pearson's chi-square test, p-value = 0.014. The nearer to zero this value, the more likely it is that the variables are dependent on each other. As a rule, the most widely used significance levels are 0.01 and 0.05. This work will adopt 0.05, so a p value below this figure will confirm the relation between the variables. Furthermore, the results of the crossing need to have an expected frequency above 5, which is a requirement to apply the chi-square test. The analysis of the corrected residuals, their amount and their sign will reveal the direction of this correspondence.