

THE DECISIONAL PROCESS FOR A FAMILY TOURIST EXPERIENCE: SOME EVIDENCE FROM A SICILIAN SAMPLE

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INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The tourist sector and above all the *hotellerie* nowadays is more and more specialized in satisfying particular customers' needs. To identify the features of the target of Sicilian families and their tourist needs; moreover, to suggest a valuable product definition, we investigate the consumer behaviour connected to family hotel services by considering three research questions: R1) do the children influence the type (destination, accommodation, duration, etc.) of family vacation and how it happens; R2) how is decision-making influence allocated within the family? R3) which are the typical needs/services a family would like to satisfy/acquire during the vacation?

Table 1. Vacation items: "who decides what"

	Husband (%)	Wife (%)	Kids (%)
Holiday Period	51,29	41,42	7,30
Destination	45,56	43,34	11,10
Budget	49,24	46,82	3,94
Duration	48,52	45,40	6,08
Reservation	48,40	43,05	8,55
Accommodation	47,56	43,52	8,92
Transfers	51,00	40,35	8,65
Food experience	40,72	48,18	11,11
Shopping	30,52	55,12	14,36
Tourist activities during the vacation	40,20	44,08	15,71
Fellow travellers	46,16	43,43	10,41
Cultural heritage	44,71	45,87	9,42
Kid care services	37,26	48,51	14,23

METHODS AND RESULTS

The empirical survey involves a first sample of 100 Sicilian families selected with the help of a Sicilian not for profit association of parents: "Noi Genitori. Famiglia e Società", and used a questionnaire divided in different sections: demographic details (settlement, education, employment, etc.), type and evaluation of previous holiday experiences and reservation channels, persons involved in the choosing process and selecting items, services really included during the vacation.

The results confirm that: children influence the decision process; mother and father play different role in connection with the different step of the decisional process; the vacation period is a golden opportunity to make stronger the family mood.

CONCLUSIONS

The empirical (*preliminary*) survey involved a first sample of 100 Sicilian families selected with the help of a Sicilian not for profit association of parents: "Noi Genitori. Famiglia e Società", and used a questionnaire divided in different sections: demographic details (settlement, education, employment, etc.), type and evaluation of previous holiday experiences and reservation channels, persons involved in the choosing process and selecting items, services really included during the vacation.

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