

Proposal of a Model for the Choice of a Holiday Destination – The Case of Algerian Couples

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Abstract

Generally, the behavior analysis of couples is not easy. Also, many researchers agree that the purchasing behavior of a small group, like a couple, is characterized by a complex collective decision-making process. Moreover, it is difficult to enter the nuclear family and anticipate the behavior of the two spouses. In the same way, one may say that the factors that influence their choices and decisions evolve and their expectations and attitudes are constantly changing, which makes a certain number of marketing tools obsolete. As a result, travel agencies are required to seek to understand the process of choosing a vacation destination within couples in order to make the right communication decisions. This study focuses on the decision-making process of a couple in choosing a tourist destination. It is particularly aimed at evaluating the couple's different behavioral (cognitive / affective / conative) approaches in order to better understand the extremely complex rational and irrational aspects of the husband-wife dyad.

Keywords: Couple decision-making process; Attitude; Holiday destination.

1. Introduction

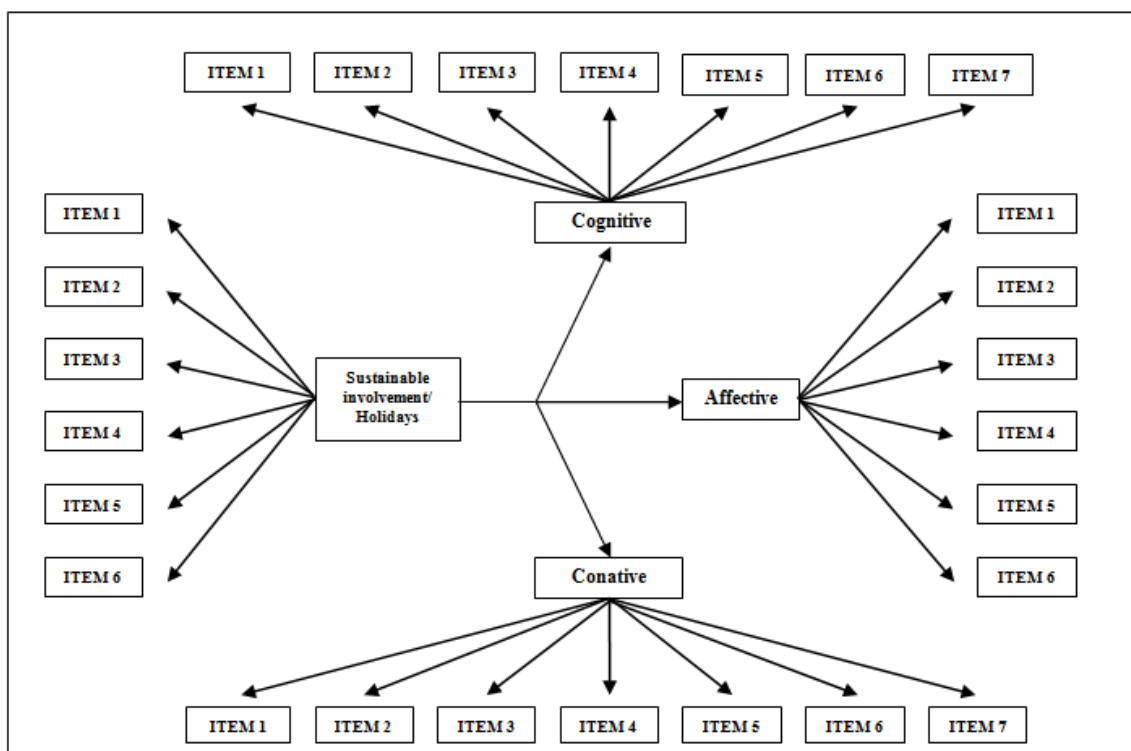
Couples' behaviors are different and decision-making is often collective since consumption is very often carried out in a conjugal context. It is therefore important to describe diversity in couples. Davis and Rigaux (1974) examined the relative influence of the husband-wife dyad on a holiday *destination-selection decision within the family* through three stages, namely *Recognition of need*, *Collection of information* and *Final decision*. These two authors came to the conclusion that the holiday *destination-selection decision* is *syncretic in nature*. In his study of making a vacation decision, Jenkins (1979) attempts to identify the family member who has the most influence on vacation sub-decisions. This author found out that in most couples, the husband is the one who is most interested in issues relating to the collection of tourist information, duration of the holidays, choice of the departure date and holiday budget. According to Jenkins (1979), women do not have a dominant position in *vacation decision-making*. More concretely, it can be said that the husband has a more influencing and dominant position in taking decisions regarding financial and temporal constraints. However, decisions relating to the activities they will do during the holidays are generally taken jointly by the two spouses. Several researchers agree on the fact that tourist or holiday decision-making implies strong involvement of several family members. Cohen et al. (2014) indicate that annual vacations are becoming more and more a family affair; they said that "*Annual family vacations can be considered, in terms of marketing, as a consumer behavior in a situation of strong involvement, requiring joint decision-making activities involving several family members in the choice and planning processes, and in which children will certainly play a leading role*". For their part, Horner and Swarbrooke (2016) state that "*Decisions regarding family travel are often complex because important family decision-making takes time and usually involves multiple parties; family decisions are commonly referred to as high-involvement decisions*".

After this brief introduction, one can then state the main problem of the present research through the following question:

How is a holiday destination choice made within the Algerian couple?

The practical interest of this study is to integrate the different behavioral approaches (cognitive / affective / conative) in order to better understand the couples' decisions.

The above problem can be represented using the following structural model:



Source: Model elaborated by the authors

Figure 1: Research structural model

To answer this problem, it was decided to proceed in three stages. The first step is to present a literature review relating to the perception of the couple's relative influence, while presenting the problem of our research in an appropriate way. Then, a description of the recommended research methodology is presented, considering the case study of a tourist destination. Finally, the results obtained are presented and discussed.

2. Literature review

Davis and Rigaud (1974) reported that both members of the couple play different but equally important roles in the decision-making process. They stated that the degree of relative influence that each spouse can exercise varies according to the type of product and the level of decision-making. Regarding family vacations, it was found that both members have the same level of influence, throughout all phases of the decision-making process. Moreover, several studies have shown that the relative influence within a couple, or a family, can vary, not only according to the type of product and the stage of the decision-making process, but also according to initiatives which are an integral part of the final decision. In addition, the composition and functions of families have considerably evolved in the last three decades due to many social changes that have taken place (women in the labor market, divorce, urbanization, etc.). These changes have required extensive research on the way individuals or groups make their decisions; some purchases involve only one person, while others are rarely done by isolated individuals but are rather decided by the family unit [16]. Be that as it may, there are some products and services whose purchase decision is made by one or the other of the members of the couple [9, 1]. For that reason, the present study attempts to assess sustainable involvement, as well as the cognitive, affective, and conative behavior. This investigation is particularly aimed at exploring the decision-making process when the couple is called upon to make a *travel destination decision*.

3. Empirical study

In order to bring some elements of response to the problem of this study, it was considered more interesting to carry out an exploratory study within the couple in order to better elucidate the various steps involved in the decision making process regarding *tourist destination choice decision-making*. As part of the present investigation, it was decided to use the questionnaire survey as the most appropriate tool for collecting information. The questionnaires were administered by investigators, who are university students.

3.1. Research methodology

To address the problem of the present research, it was considered appropriate to conduct an exploratory study of 210 couples (husband/wife), representing 210 nuclear families from different neighborhoods of the large urban

center of the town of Tlemcen (northern Algeria).

3.2. Results

In this part of the study, the results obtained through the data collection operation are analyzed. These data will certainly help us to answer a series of questions in our research.

3.2.1. Reliability and internal consistency of the measurement model for choosing a holiday destination

The results of the principal components analysis (PCA) regarding holidays are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Internal consistency of measurement scales in choosing a holiday destination for the husband

Variables	Number of Retained Items	KMO	Cronbach α	ANOVA		Bartlett's sphericity	Avge	Cov	Total Variance
				F	Sig				
VCIMP	6	0.864	0.954	8.531	0.000	0.000	4.085	0.9495	82.009
VCCOG	7	0.907	0.917	63.861			3.628	1.3033	77.140
VCAFF	5	0.841	0.798	81.435			3.673	1.0950	69.390
VCCON	7	0.859	0.821	14.798			3.552	1.2217	74.205
Total	25	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Source: Elaborated by the authors using the Statistica Software (N = 210).

The results from this study show a Cronbach Alpha > 0.79, KMO > 0.82, Bartlett's sphericity = 0.000 with a community of over 69% for all variables. This reveals a good internal consistency of the measurement scales.

Table 2: Internal consistency of measurement scales in selecting a holiday destination for the wife

Variables	Number of Retained Items	KMO	Cronbach α	ANOVA		Bartlett's sphericity	Avge	Cov	Total Variance
				F	Sig				
VCIMP	6	0.883	0.951	13.564	0.000	0.000	4.100	0.9748	80.809
VCCOG	6	0.883	0.937	56.003			3.437	1.1135	77.084
VCAFF	5	0.775	0.822	82.653			3.100	1.1022	58.993
VCCON	7	0.854	0.912	34.590			3.397	1.2481	66.359
Total	24/25	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Source: Elaborated by the authors using Statistica (N = 210).

The principal components analysis (PCA), carried out previously, allows saying that the results obtained are conclusive. Cronbach's alpha in the measurement scale for sustainable involvement is excellent since it is greater than 0.9. Moreover, the alphas of all factors are equally good; they vary between 0.91 and 0.93. The KMO values are all greater than 0.75, which confirms the results obtained with Cronbach's alpha. Similarly, it was found that the Bartlett's sphericity test was significant, which supports the adequacy of the data to the factorial correspondence analysis (FCA).

Table 3: Structural model fit indices in selecting a holiday destination

Indices	Absolute fit indices	
	Husband values	Wife values
Chi 2	1486.88	1423.5
Degrees of Freedom DF	272	249
Level p	0000	0000
RMS Standardized Residues	0.134	0.111
(GFI). Joreskog	0.579	0.630
(AGFI). Joreskog	0.497	0.554
Population Noncentrality Parameter	7.780	5.863
McDonald's Noncentrality Index	0.020	0.053
RMSEA Steiger-Lind index	0.162	0.146
Population Gamma Index	0.637	0.694
Adjusted Population Gamma Index	0.566	0.631
Incremental Fit Indices		
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index	0.711	0.773
Bentler-Bonett Non-Normed Fit Index	0.723	0.782
Bentler Comparative Fit Index	0.749	0.804
Bollen's Rho	0.681	0.748
Bollen's Delta	0.750	0.805
Parsimonious Fit Indices		
James-Mulaik-Brett Parsimonious Fit Index	0.645	0.697
Ch2 /DF	5.460	5.716

Source: Elaborated by the author using Statistica (N = 210)

Fit indices are generally good. Moreover, the estimated and observed values are practically close to each other; this allows asserting that the constructs studied using the measurement and structural models give

satisfactory results.

3.2.2. Evaluation of the measurement model relating to the husband's behavior for the choice of a holiday destination

Table 4: Measurement model equation for the variable *Cognitive behavior/Holidays/Husband*

Manifest variables	Equation $vccog\ i = \lambda_i \cdot VCCOG + E_i$	T>1.96	P<0.05
(VCCOG)-->[vccog1]	vccog 1 = 0.596 VCCOG + 0.645	12.869	0.000
(VCCOG)-->[vccog2]	vccog 2 = 0.447 VCCOG + 0.800	7.847	
(VCCOG)-->[vccog3]	vccog 3 = 0.923 VCCOG + 0.148	72.527	
(VCCOG)-->[vccog4]	vccog 4 = 0.934 VCCOG + 0.128	80.779	
(VCCOG)-->[vccog5]	vccog 5 = 0.867 VCCOG + 0.248	45.347	
(VCCOG)-->[vccog6]	vccog 6 = 0.853 VCCOG + 0.272	41.137	
(VCCOG)-->[vccog7]	vccog 7 = 0.755 VCCOG + 0.430	23.982	

Source: Elaborated by the authors using Statistica Software (N=210)

Table 5: Measurement model equation for the variable *Affective behavior/Holidays/Husband*

Manifest variables	Equation $vcaff\ i = \lambda_i \cdot VCAFF + E_i$	T>1.96	P<0.05
(VCAFF)-->[vcaff1]	vcaff 1 = 0.571 VCAFF + 0.674	10.941	0.000
(VCAFF)-->[vcaff2]	vcaff 2 = 0.690 VCAFF + 0.524	16.270	
(VCAFF)-->[vcaff3]	vcaff 3 = 0.727 VCAFF + 0.472	18.600	
(VCAFF)-->[vcaff4]	vcaff 4 = 0.816 VCAFF + 0.335	26.113	
(VCAFF)-->[vcaff5]	vcaff 5 = 0.558 VCAFF + 0.689	10.491	

Source: Elaborated by the authors using Statistica (N=210 husbands)

Tableau 6: Measurement model equation for the variable *Conative behavior / holidays / husband*

Manifest variables	Equation $Vccon\ i = \lambda_i \cdot VCCON + E_i$	T>1.96	P<0.05
(VCCON)-->[vcon1]	vcon1 = 0.757 VCCON + 0.426	23.336	0.000
(VCCON)-->[vcon2]	vcon 2 = 0.872 VCCON + 0.239	42.775	
(VCCON)-->[vcon3]	vcon 3 = 0.866 VCCON + 0.168	55.366	
(VCCON)-->[vcon4]	vcon 4 = 0.912 VCCON + 0.252	40.806	
(VCCON)-->[vcon5]	vcon 5 = 0.865 VCCON + 0.975	2.251	
(VCCON)-->[vcon6]	vcon 6 = 0.379 VCCON + 0.856	6.134	
(VCCON)-->[vcon7]	vcon 7 = -0.180 VCCON + 0.968	2.592	

Source: Elaborated by the authors using Statistica (N=210 husbands)

The analysis of Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 suggests that the conditions required to ensure the validity of the measurement model are satisfied. The convergent validity (evaluated using factorial contributions) and the discriminant validity (evaluated by examining the correlations between manifest constructs) are acceptable.

3.2.3. Factorial correlations of the structural model of the husband's behavior in choosing a holiday destination

The factorial correlations of the structural model of the husband's behavior in selecting a holiday destination confirm the impact of the latent explanatory variable on the variables in the hierarchy of explained effects. It is therefore possible to say that the contribution of the husband's sustainable involvement helps to explain his behavior towards the purchase of a holiday destination. A thorough search for information allowed stating that the affective side is predominant in the decision-making process for this type of product or service for the husband. Finally, the results obtained allow us to notice that there is an interconnection between the cognitive (rationality) side and the affective side for the husband in purchasing a holiday destination. This is also confirmed by the results from the structural model (Figure 2).

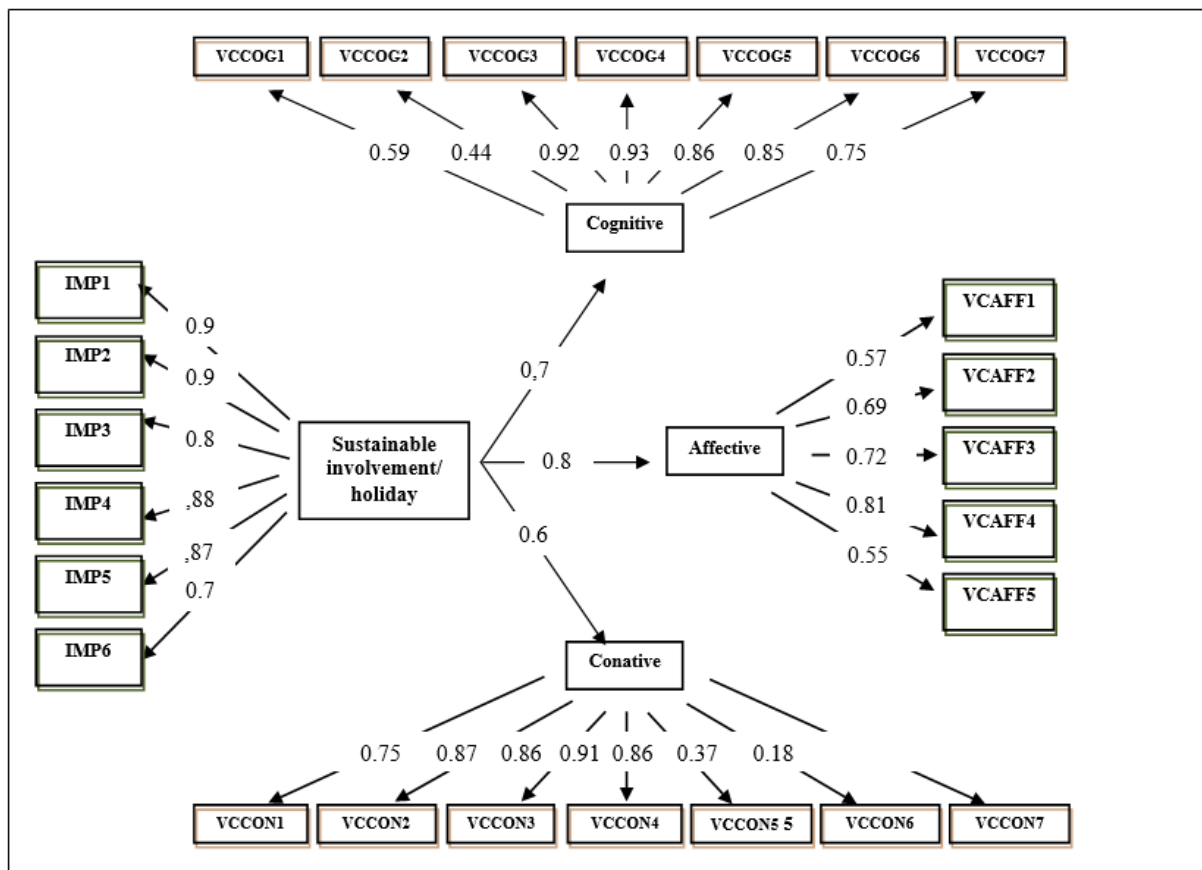


Figure 2: Results of the structural model for husbands

2.2.4. Evaluation of the model of wife’s behavior for the purchase of a holiday destination

Table 7: Measurement model equation for the variable *Cognitive behavior / Holidays / Wife*

Manifest variables	Equation $vccog\ i = \lambda_i \cdot VCCOG + E_i$	T>1.96	P<0.05
(VCCOG)-->[vccog1]	$vccog\ 1 = 0.679\ VCCOG + 0.539$	17.894	0.000
(VCCOG)-->[vccog2]	$vccog\ 2 = 0.516\ VCCOG + 0.733$	10.043	
(VCCOG)-->[vccog3]	$vccog\ 3 = 0.969\ VCCOG + 0.061$	180.771	
(VCCOG)-->[vccog4]	$vccog\ 4 = 0.972\ VCCOG + 0.056$	191.997	
(VCCOG)-->[vccog5]	$vccog\ 5 = 0.946\ VCCOG + 0.106$	115.442	
(VCCOG)-->[vccog6]	$vccog\ 6 = 0.944\ VCCOG + 0.109$	112.002	

Source: Elaborated by the authors using the software Statistica (N=210)

Tableau 8: Measurement model equation for the variable *Affective behavior/Holidays/Wife*

Manifest variables	Equation $vcaff\ i = \lambda_i \cdot VCAFF + E_i$	T>1.96	P<0.05
(VCAFF)-->[vcaff1]	$vcaff\ 1 = 0.769\ VCAFF + 0.523$	24.209	0.000
(VCAFF)-->[vcaff2]	$vcaff\ 2 = 0.898\ VCAFF + 0.343$	46.779	
(VCAFF)-->[vcaff3]	$vcaff\ 3 = 0.724\ VCAFF + 0.982$	19.935	
(VCAFF)-->[vcaff4]	$vcaff\ 4 = 0.558\ VCAFF + 0.837$	10.999	
(VCAFF)-->[vcaff5]	$vcaff\ 5 = 0.439\ VCAFF + 0.099$	7.450	

Source: Elaborated by the authors using Statistica (N=210)

Tableau 9 : Measurement model equation for the variable *Conative behavior/ Holidays /Wife*

Manifest variables	Equation $vcconi = \lambda_i \cdot VCCON + E_i$	T>1.96	P<0.05
(VCCON)→[vcon1]	$vccon1 = 0,807 VCCON + 0,349$	30,192	0.000
(VCCON)→[vcon2]	$vccon2 = 0,848 VCCON + 0,281$	38,241	
(VCCON)→[vcon3]	$vccon3 = 0,899 VCCON + 0,191$	54,493	
(VCCON)→[vcon4]	$vccon4 = 0,833 VCCON + 0,306$	34,879	
(VCCON)→[vcon5]	$vccon5 = 0,769 VCCON + 0,409$	24,989	
(VCCON)→[vcon6]	$vccon6 = 0,784 VCCON + 0,386$	26,857	
(VCCON)→[vcon7]	$vccon7 = 0,487 VCCON + 0,763$	8,863	

Source: Elaborated by the authors using Statistica (N = 210)

The values of the factorial index λ_i are above average for most items in the scales tested within the measurement model. The estimation errors E_i are small, which means that the results are acceptable.

Table 10: General equations of the structural model for the influence of sustainable involvement on the wife's behavior in choosing a holiday destination

Relations	Code and Equation of Variables	B_i	E_i	T>1.96	P<0.05
(VCIMP)→(VCCOG)	$VCCOG = \beta_i VCIMP + E_i$	0.692	0.521	18.474	0.000
(VCIMP)→(VCAFF)	$VCAFF = \beta_i VCIMP + E_i$	0.909	0.174	48.085	
(VCIMP)→(VCCON)	$VCCON = \beta_i VCIMP + E_i$	0.775	0.399	25.119	

Source: Elaborated by the authors using Statistica (N = 210)

The results presented in Table 10 confirm the impact of the latent variable "Sustainable involvement" on the wife's behavior in choosing a holiday destination. The correlation coefficients are very acceptable, and the conditions of the test, $T > 1.96$ and $P < 0.05$, are satisfied. In addition, the wife's behavior is more emotional than cognitive when choosing a holiday destination. This is clearly confirmed by Figure 3.

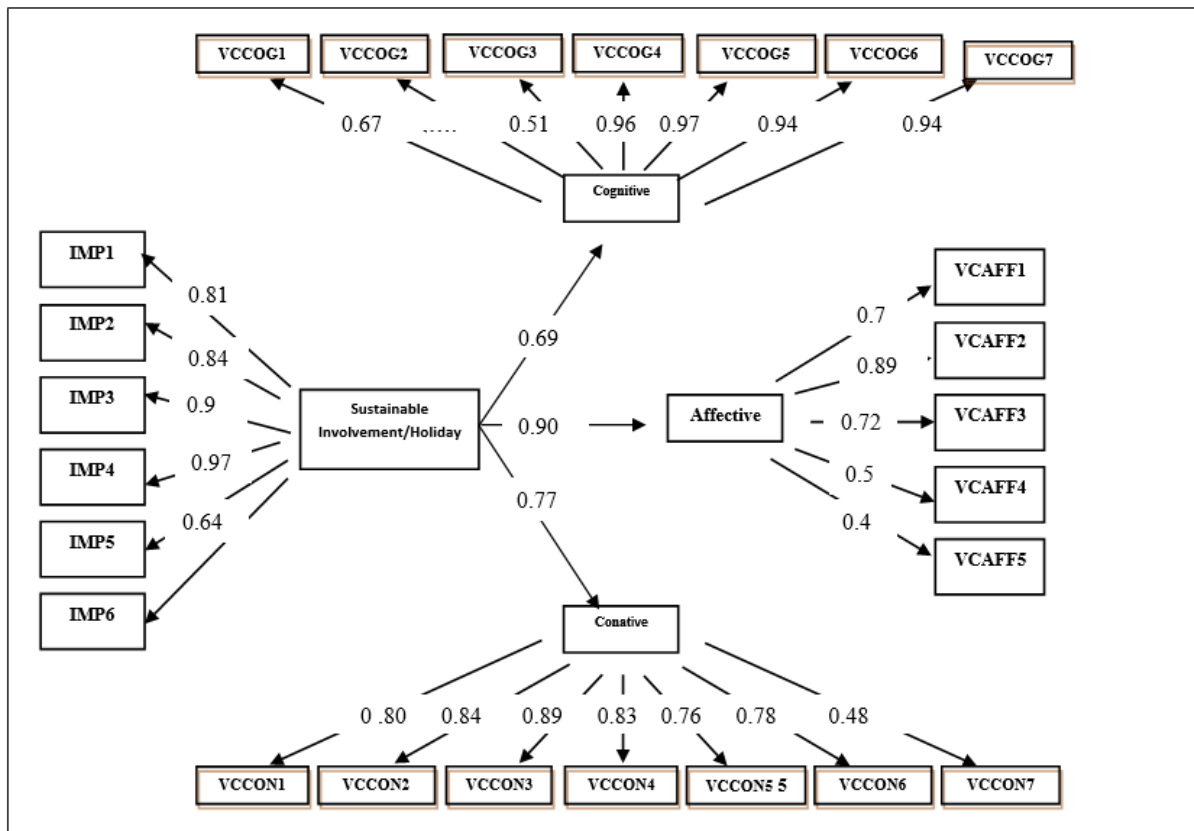


Figure 3: Results of the wife's structural model

4. Conclusion

The aim of our research paper was to provide an overview of the behavioral approach of couples in choosing a holiday destination. After presenting and interpreting the results obtained from the surveyed population

(Algerian couples), we tried to make a general observation.

It is important to note that selecting a tourist destination is based on syncretic decisions; the tasks to carry out in the decision-making process are shared between the two spouses. The results of the study showed that women have an influence on triggering a holiday destination choice. It is also interesting to note that the search for information and the final decision are up to both members of the couple. Our research showed that travel decisions are usually made by wives who show rather emotional behavior. On the other hand, husbands make decisions with more rationality and a lot of calculations.

The results of this study strongly recommend that behavioral approaches should be seriously considered in *tourism destination marketing* in order to fully understand the characteristics of Algerian couples and consequently propose tourist destinations according to their profiles and their expectations. Therefore, investigating the behavior when choosing a holiday destination within the couple proves to be essential for travel agencies since there may be many consequences resulting from the marketing decisions they make. Some of these decisions are market segmentation, strengthening the image of service proposed, advertising strategies, loyalty programs, enrichment and diversification; this should help to ensure the good quality of the services offered. Therefore, understanding how and why the couple shows a rational or emotional behavior is a blessing for travel agencies and tourism companies.

5. Limitations of our research

Despite the importance of the results obtained and their positive marketing consequences, this study has shown some limitations that could become interesting avenues for future research.

- In this study, we limited ourselves to the neighborhoods of the large urban center of the city of Tlemcen; however, it would probably be better to consider the rural areas as well. It would be highly desirable to compare the behavioral approaches of couples in urban and rural areas. This would certainly allow for the adoption of the most appropriate tourism strategies depending on the behavioral approach and the role structure in each zone, if differences exist.

- The present work did not take into consideration couples belonging to extended families which include people who are not part of the nuclear family but live under the same roof. It would be interesting to conduct a comparative study to determine and understand the roles played by couples in both types of families, i.e. nuclear and extended families.

6. Future research directions

A possible line of research could focus on the determination of marital roles, depending on the different social classes in our society. Researchers consider that marital roles could strongly influence the distribution of functions between spouses in triggering a tourist destination choice.

A more rigorous study on the impact of resource theory would be desirable in order to understand and explain the decision-making patterns of couples within the Algerian cultural and socio-economic context.

The integration of couples' socio-professional variables, such as age, income, education level, etc., would also be worthy in order to better identify the needs and expectations of each couple.

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