
ECONOMICS

Sociology

Niemczyk, A. (2015), Family Decisions on the Tourist Market, *Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 8, No 3, pp. 272-283. DOI: 10.14254/2071-789X.2015/8-3/19

Agata Niemczyk,
Department of Tourism,
Faculty of Management,
Cracow University of Economics,
Cracow, Poland,
E-mail:
agata.niemczyk@uek.krakow.pl

Received: May, 2015
1st Revision: June, 2015
Accepted: September, 2015

DOI: 10.14254/2071-789X.2015/8-3/19

JEL Classification: D11,
D12, L83

Keywords: family decisions, tourist market, Krakow, survey.

FAMILY DECISIONS ON THE TOURIST MARKET

ABSTRACT. The purpose of this article is to present the specificity of family decisions on the tourist market. The first part of the article describes the four models of family decision-making and identifies the determinants of making joint and individual decisions. The second part discusses the profiling of a tourist whose tourist-trip-related family decisions are made jointly and of a tourist whose decisions in this respect are dominated by the family member whose income is the highest. Moreover, the areas of tourist decisions were recognised showing that decisions made by families with dependent children were on the one hand similar whilst on the other different from those made by childless families. Similar analysis was conducted among the families with dependent children who play the role of initiator, advisor and decision-maker in terms of organizing a tourist trip and among those families where children do not play such roles. Empirical data obtained in the course of primary research conducted in Krakow in 2014 were used as the basis of this study.

Introduction

It is commonly known that the fundamental element of marketing is consumer-based thinking with the emphasis on consumer needs. This is the starting point for any actions of numerous enterprises and sellers on the market. It is the insight into consumer behaviour itself that is indispensable when developing marketing programs, and also in using marketing tools effectively, including on the tourist market. Their importance gets even higher if the consumer is a family – a set of different people making consensual decisions – agreed rationally and analytically or in a compromise – leading to mitigation of initially contrasting ideas (Dyck, Daly, 2006).

Making decisions on tourism product purchase, which means choosing a destination in the first place and then organisation of the tourist trip, plays an exceptional role in family decision-making. The purpose of this article is to present the specificity of family decisions on the tourist market. Theoretical considerations were complemented by empirical research which is to verify the purpose of the work in the surveyed population composed of the residents of Krakow (Poland).

1. Models of family decision-making – selected problems

In their life time people make an enormous number of decisions. Among them one can find those relating to satisfying tourist needs. Reducing this number, especially in an environment of many people comprising a family, might be a very long and complicated process. There are four models of family decision making present in the literature (Loudon *et al.*, 1993; Nichols, Snepenger, 1988; Fodness, 1992; Kirchler, 1993):

- autonomic model, when decision about purchase is made by each member of family independently;
- patriarchal model, when decision about purchase is made by a husband¹;
- matriarchal model, when decision about purchase is made by a wife²;
- partner/friendly model (i.e. syncretic system) when decision about purchase is made either by some or all members of family³.

There are a number of factors, both tourist-related and product and its purchase-related having impact on the manner of making decisions (either consensus decisions – a manifestation of partner model or individual – manifested in the autonomic model) (Howard, Madrigal, 1990).

The first group of factors includes inter alia a tourist's education, financial situation (Schänzel *et al.*, 2005), belonging to a particular social group (Crompton, 1981). Among the factors relating to the purchase of a tourism product one can find e.g. the importance of a decision or the pressure of time (more: Niemczyk, 1999, pp. 42-44), and regarding the product – its attractions. Changes of civilisation taking place around us suggest that the impact of specified features will be changing and so will the presence of the aforementioned models, in particular the patriarchal and matriarchal models which will be led towards the autonomic and partner ones.

With regard to the group decision making, what is important and is selected is often the division of roles among the participants of a family decision making process. For instance one person (the initiator) might have an idea to spend holiday by the sea, whereas the other (the advisor) might suggest a holiday by the Mediterranean Sea, then another person (the decision-maker) might make a final decision to fund the journey and travel, subsequently another person (the buyer) might buy the tickets, accommodation, etc., finally another person (the user) might go on such holiday (Jedlińska, 2006, p. 179). Many of these roles, like initiator, advisor, user are played by children. However, according to the literature on the subject the final decision is made by the parents (Carr, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2004). It should be emphasized that currently a special role of children in a decision making process on a tourist trip is observed (Johns, Gyimothy, 2002; Cullingford, 1995; Gram, 2007; Martensen, Gronholdt, 2008; Assael, 1995; Howard, Madrigal, 1990; Gram, Therkelsen, 2003; Seweryn, 2015). Generally the participation of children in the decision-making process changes significantly with the age of children (John, 1999; Darley, Lim, 1986; Roedder, 1999). Small children usually decide on satisfying their own needs by persuading others to buy such things as toys or sweets and the like. The more adolescent they become, the more they engage in making consensus decisions aiming at satisfying the needs referring to the household

¹ The literature notes explicit influence of a husband when making decisions on choosing e.g. cars, television sets, lawn mowers (Mohan, 1995), life insurance and other (Davis, Rigaux, 1974), and horticulture equipment and home repairs.

² The dominance of a wife becomes visible regarding the choice of inter alia household appliances and clothing (Mohan, 1995), food and beverages (non-alcoholic), and household cleaning products (Davis, Rigaux, 1974).

³ Ndubisi and Koo (2005) consider holiday trips as an example of consensus decisions and according to the authors more modern families declare higher propensity in this respect than traditional families. The authors observe similar tendency with respect to the purchase of furniture.

(Caruana, Vassallo, 2003; Chavda *et al.*, 2005; Swinyard, Sim, 1987; Tufte, 2003) or the decision about the tourist trip⁴.

It can be assumed that participation of children in the decision making process is manifested in the following ways (Niemczyk, 1999, p. 43; Niemczyk, 2010, pp. 64-65):

- acting as autonomic individuals, provided they have their own money. It can be surmised that they do not make decisions themselves as far as the tourist trip is concerned, yet they certainly do make such decisions when on holiday travel regarding various purchasing decisions;
- influencing other family members' decisions. Children act in the capacity of either initiators of certain shopping activities or advisors to their parents, thus having impact on their decisions. More and more often they decide on the destination of the trip as a result of having seen a commercial on the Internet or television. However, most of all thanks to the social media – a platform for exchanging peer opinions.
- being under the influence of other family members, mainly their mothers who impose their preferences on children. That is to say, the preferences and attitudes towards the means and ways of satisfying the needs, including travel are formed in early childhood; the bond with tourism is formed.

The conclusion which may be drawn from the above is that there are many different decisions made by a family, including the consensus decisions, i.e. partner decisions and those dominated by one family member, e.g. the one with the highest income. In this context a question emerged: What sort of decisions do the Polish people make as far as the holiday travel is concerned? The following research will answer the question posed.

2. Methodology

In the first quarter of 2014, a face-to-face questionnaire was carried out among the residents of Krakow who declared themselves (Kaczmarczyk, 2003) participants in tourism – both home and abroad trips. The instrument used in research was the author's survey (verified by pilot studies). It consisted of a few specific questions helping to solve many research problems (e.g. Niemczyk, 2015), amongst them the one addressed in this article and index questions to identify their socio-demographic status. The sample population consisted of 732 respondents, which allowed minimizing the margin of error in the results.

It is commonly known that if the size of the estimated parameter p is unknown, the minimum effective sample n size required to estimate the structure ratio p at the confidence level $(1 - \alpha)$ with a maximum error of estimate of not more than $d=4\%$ equals $n=600$ (Nowak, 2007, p. 307).

The highest percentage of the research population was represented by:

- women – 54.4% of the population;
- people aged 31-44, who represented a quarter of the population; the smallest fraction of the researched population – 2.7% consisted of the minors aged 16-17;
- people with higher education – 51.5%;
- white collar workers – 44.1% of the whole research population;

⁴ The literature says that French and Italian children (aged 13-18) were more engaged in decision-making process regarding the choice of vacation than children from Belgium and Great Britain. Nearly half of the young Italian respondents declared vast participation in the choice, whereas half of the British – little or none (Bowen, Clarke, 2009). Another research acknowledges that 20–35% of parents reported in the context of vacation that their children's influence was strong in the choice of destination, timing, activities and accommodation (Jenkins 1979). Wang *et al.* (2004) echoing Swinyard and Sim (1987) noted that the influence of children ranged from 68.7% of respondents in problem recognition, 39% in information search, 49.2% in final decision and 20.2% in purchase choice.

- respondents regarding their financial situation as good – 51.4%;
- individuals living in 4-person households – 30.6%;
- respondents without dependent children – 33.6% of the population (by way of illustration, respondents with two dependent children constituted 30%).

Being aware of the changes in the environment (social, demographic, economic, etc.) where the individuals operate, including Polish families and knowing that the patterns of individuals' behaviour undergo continuous changes due to the changes in the environment, specific areas of family decision making on the tourist market were identified. Interest was focused on the types of decisions made in the families, i.e. consensus decisions and decision dominated by one of the members of the family (one with the highest income) and the influence of children on the family decision making regarding tourist trips. Two research questions were asked in this context:

1. What does the profile of a tourist whose family decisions about a tourist trip are made jointly look like, and what does it look like in case of a tourist whose decisions in this respect are dominated by the family member whose income is the highest?
2. In relation to a tourist trip, which decision making issues showed the difference and which showed the similarities between the families with and without children?

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Family travel decision making – consensus and dominated

The analysis of empirical data obtained from the research allowed noticing that as far as the decisions relating to the tourist trip are concerned, men more often declared that they were made by the family member with the highest income, whereas women that they were made jointly (see *Figure 1*).

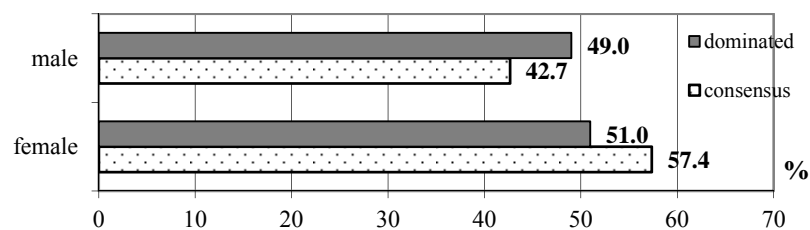


Figure 1. Family decision making and the gender of respondents

Source: Own compilation.

Moreover, the conducted research allowed noticing that as the education was higher, the percentage of declarations about consensus decisions was growing. *Figure 2* shows the details.

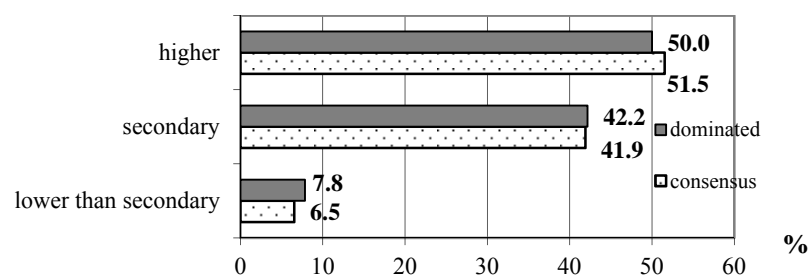


Figure 2. Family decision making and the education of respondents

Source: Own compilation.

The empirical material gained from the research also allowed the recognition of differences in family decisions depending on the socio-professional status of respondents. The particulars are shown in *Figure 3*. The conclusion drawn from it is that among the employed people, both blue collar and white collar workers and especially in the latter group, consensus decisions prevailed. This trend was even more visible among the pensioners. As far as dominated decisions are concerned, it should not be surprising that they were explicitly declared by the students and registered unemployed. However it is interesting to notice that self-employed people declared likewise, most likely due to the character of their professional activity (Witek, 2007).



Figure 3. Family decision making and socio-professional status of respondents
Source: Own compilation.

Taking a look at the data summarized in *Figure 4* it becomes clear that the financial situation of a respondent is related to the manner of making decisions – the more difficult, the higher the percentage of decisions dominated by the family member who earns the most. However, as the financial conditions get better the explicit dominance of consensus decisions relating to a tourist trip is revealed. It is worth emphasizing that this way of making decisions is growing in importance, if we treat people who declared to be in either good or very good material situation as one population. Nonetheless, considering the situation presented in *Figure 4* it is readily apparent that a very good financial situation results in decisions dominated by the family member with the highest income, which sounds obvious when the nature of the problem is considered.

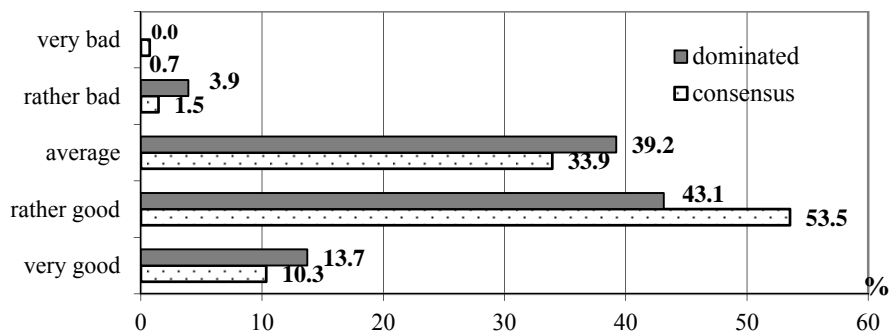


Figure 4. Family decision making and financial situation of respondents
Source: Own compilation.

3.2. Families with and without children and their decisions on the tourist market

A study was carried out to check if the decisions made by the families with children in relation to the tourist trips (S_1 , so called experimental group) differ from those made by the families without children (S_2 , so called control group). U Mann-Whitney test (Nadim, 2008, pp. 13-17) and chi-squared test χ^2 (Greenwood, 1996, p. 280) were applied. Two research hypotheses were made simultaneously: H_0 – decisions relating to satisfying tourist needs made by families with children (S_1) were the same as of childless families and H_1 – decisions relating to satisfying tourist needs made by both groups (S_1 and S_2) differed substantially. If the result of a test probability p (rejection error H_0) was less than $\alpha=0.05$, H_1 should be accepted. Otherwise ($p > 0.05$) there were no grounds for rejection of H_0 . The results were summarized in *Table 1*.

Among the studied factors describing tourist family decision-making one can find determinants of the choice of places of tourist reception. The study allowed the recognition of significant differences between S_1 and S_2 groups in this respect. Regarding the hierarchy of determinants of the choice of domestic destination, a dramatic difference between S_1 and S_2 was observed in: monuments, cost of travelling and the time needed for travel. Considering the monuments, they were more often declared on top positions of the ranking of significance of selected determinants by S_2 than by S_1 . The situation was analogical in the case of time needed for travel. However, it gave way to the monuments in both groups. The situation was reversed in the case of the cost of transport. This determinant was more important for the representatives of S_1 group. Nonetheless, the significance of this factor was higher than in the case of monuments. This regularity seems correct if the economic factors related to any tourist trip (domestic in this case) are considered. In S_1 the mode for the cost of stay was identified with the first rank of importance, whereas the mode for monuments – with the third, while for S_2 group respectively: *ex aequo* with the third and fourth and the third.

Subsequently, in the case of abroad trips a single determinant significantly differentiated decisions made by the families with children from the childless families. Security rank turned out to be the one. It was more often reported to be the most important determinant in abroad trips by the families with children than by the childless families.

Table 1. The significance level of the differences between selected areas of the decisions related to tourist trips made by families with children (S_1 group) and childless families (S_2 group)

Itemization	Type of test	p	Additional parameters
Frequency of travelling	Mann-Whitney U test	$p=.251$	$z=1.147$
Preferred destinations (uncharted places; towns not visited before)	χ^2	$p=.404$	$k=2$
Shopping-related excursions		$p=.076$	$k=2$
Determinants of the choice of destination either domestic or abroad			
Natural attractions	DT	$p=.943$	$z=-0.072$
	AT	$p=.059$	$z=1.891$
Landscape	DT	$p=.498$	$z=0.677$
	AT	Mann-Whitney U test	$p=.554$ $z=0.592$
Local cuisine	DT	$p=.891$	$z=-0.136$
	AT	$p=.964$	$z=-0.045$
Traditions, local customs	DT	$p=.185$	$z=1.325$
	AT	$p=.380$	$z=-0.877$

Monuments	DT	p=.025	z=2.234
	AT	p=.458	z=0.742
Shopping centers/boutiques/other shops	DT	p=.957	z=-0.055
	AT	p=.880	z=0.151
High culture institutions	DT	p=.436	z=0.779
	AT	p=.669	z=0.427
Recreation and sports offer	DT	p=.415	z=-0.815
	AT	p=.992	z=0.010
Entertainment offer	DT	p=.164	z=-1.393
	AT	p=.681	z=0.412
Security	DT	p=.202	z=1.275
	AT	p=.009	z=2.612
Cost of stay in a tourist place	DT	p=.060	z=1.878
	AT	p=.444	z=0.765
Cost of transport to a tourist place	DT	p=.022	z=2.294
	AT	p=.256	z=1.137
Weather	DT	p=.074	z=1.787
	AT	p=.533	z=0.624
Time needed for travel	DT	p=.039	z=2.068
	AT	p=.393	z=0.853

Statistically significant differences were marked in bold and the coloured background.

DT – domestic trip

AT – abroad trip

Source: Own compilation.

3.3. Children as the initiators, advisors and decision-makers on the tourist market

The article turns one's attention to the child's role in the tourist family decision-making describing it as active – when they are initiators, advisors or decision-makers, and passive – when they show no participation. Thus, the study focused on recognizing if the decisions made by the families with children who play the role of initiators, advisors or decision-makers in tourist trips (S_1) differed from those made by the respondents whose children do not play such roles (S_2). Mann-Whitney U test and chi-squared χ^2 test were applied again. The results were summarized in *Table 2*. They allowed to say that both groups differed significantly with respect to shopping excursions. They were reported more often by the representatives of S_1 in comparison with S_2 .

The study also allowed the recognition of significant differences between both groups in the hierarchy of determinants of the choice of destination both domestic and abroad. In both cases only one determinant (however, in each case a different one) differentiated their decisions. Regarding domestic trips, a determinant significantly differentiating decisions made by the families with children who played the role of initiators, advisors or decision-makers in tourist trips from those made by the respondents whose children do not play such roles was the weather. When compared, this determinant amongst all determinants of the choice of domestic destination singled out in the study was of more significance to the representatives of S_1 group. Subsequently, regarding abroad trips, the analysis of the empirical material allowed the identification of the significance of high culture institutions as a determinant significantly differentiating tourist decisions of both groups S_1 and S_2 . It occurred that the families whose children played the role of initiator, advisor or decision-maker in tourist trips ranked the offer of the high culture institutions higher in the hierarchy of determinants of the choice of abroad destination than the respondents whose children do not play such roles. In case of other variables no significant differences between the two groups were found.

Table 2. The significance level of the differences between selected areas of the decisions related to tourist trips made by S₁ group (where children are the initiators, advisors and decision-makers on the tourist trips) and S₂ (other tourists with children, where children are neither the initiators or advisors or decision-makers on the tourist trips)

Itemization	Type of test	<i>p</i>	Additional parametres
Frequency of travelling	Mann-Whitney U test	p=.062	z=1.870
Preferred destinations	χ^2	p=.952	k=2
Shopping-related excursions		p=.002	k=2
Determinants of the choice of destination either domestic or abroad			
Natural attractions	DT	p=.284	z=1.071
	AT	p=.867	z=-0.167
Landscape	DT	p=.160	z=1.405
	AT	p=.453	z=0.751
Local cuisine	DT	p=.057	z=-1.902
	AT	p=.538	z=0.617
Traditions. local customs	DT	p=.117	z=-1.350
	AT	p=.322	z=-0.991
Monuments	DT	p=.252	z=1.145
	AT	p=.471	z=0.721
Shopping centers/boutiques/other shops	DT	p=.933	z=-0.084
	AT	p=.319	z=-0.997
High culture institutions	DT	p=.241	z=-1.172
	AT	p=.015	z=-2.44
Recreation and sports offer	DT	p=.136	z=1.490
	AT	p=.604	z=0.519
Entertainment offer	DT	p=.623	z=0.491
	AT	p=.571	z=-0.566
Security	DT	p=.767	z=-0.297
	AT	p=.150	z=1.441
Cost of stay in a tourist place	DT	p=.140	z=1.477
	AT	p=.675	z=0.420
Cost of transport to a tourist place	DT	p=.912	z=0.110
	AT	p=.943	z=0.072
Weather	DT	p=.014	z=2.448
	AT	p=.065	z=1.848
Time needed for travel	DT	p=.120	z=1.554
	AT	p=.134	z=1.497

Statistically significant differences were marked in bold and the coloured background.

DT – domestic trip

AT – abroad trip

Source: Own compilation.

Issues undertaken in this article acknowledged the consensus decisions made by the families in respect to the tourist trips. Ones dominated by the family member with the highest income were uncovered among the respondents of low education and poor material status. It is worth adding that in the subject literature one can read that the lower economic possibilities of a family, the higher share in consensus decisions (Foxall, Goldsmith, 1998, pp. 246-250). This thesis seems not applicable in light of the study presented in this article. Nonetheless, the

situation should be monitored in the context of the changes of environment of individuals' operation which in consequence triggers some new regularity in their behaviour. Due to this fact researches have to remember that the outcome of this study shall undergo evolution. The situation is a result of dynamic demographic changes including the structure of a family. This attitude contains the thesis that there will be more and more families with fewer children but also more multi-generation trips (a few generations shall travel together) (Petrick, Durko, 2013). What is more, a lower number of children shall reinforce more democracy in family decision-making (Yeoman 2008), which is also indicated in this article. Moreover, according to Blichfeldt *et al.* (2011), although financial means available to children may be limited, their role as the leaders of purchase decision-making already is and shall be even more visible in the future; furthermore, the age of children explicitly differentiates their individual needs (Gram, 2005; Blichfeldt *et al.*, 2010).

The study allowed proving that tourist decisions made by the families with children differed from the decisions made by childless families regarding the hierarchy of determinants of the choice of destination. Nearly all of them determined the assets of the destination product (e.g. the weather, monuments or time needed for travel). The insight into the significance of determinants of the choice of destination is crucial for all and any creators of the area tourism product, a fortiori as their offer is targeted at many recipients including families. A significant role in the latter is played by the children, in particular if they act as the initiator, advisor or decision-maker. In this group the tendency to shopping related trips is more visible. Shopping is becoming the children's domain in the family decision-making (Tiago, Tiago, 2013). Moreover, the literature review allows pointing out different tactics of children's influence on family decision-making, from emotional – typical of the youngest, to rational – typical of the oldest. Furthermore, the influence of girls on the tourist decisions made by a family seems higher (Tiago, Tiago, 2013, p. 33).

As was suggested before, the starting point for any actions of the sellers on the tourist market is consumer-based thinking – consumer needs and means of meeting them, including both the families with children and without. The knowledge of the assets of the area tourism product (it is important to remember that a tourist prior to using the service of a tour operator “buys” a place where they expect to consume the products) allows building the appropriate product policy and conducting an appropriate promotional campaign directed at the consensus tourist decisions made by a family with regard to emotions (for the youngest) and rational (for the oldest children), remembering that the girls' influence is reported high.

Presented content gives a certain view of the subject. However it cannot be treated as constant. As was emphasized before, it may be explained in terms of changing environment where the individuals function. It seems appropriate to track the subsequent changes in the field of Polish families' behaviour, even in the context of hierarchy of the factors analysed in the study.

Conclusion

The above considerations give incentive to draw the following conclusions:

- family consensus decisions relating to the tourist trip are made mainly in the families whose members have higher education and are the employed people – both white-collar and blue-collar workers – who enjoy a high profit;
- tourist decisions are dominated by the family member with the highest income – in case of the people who are less educated, whose financial situation is not favourable and provide for themselves from not-remunerated sources (such profile gives an indication of other family members dominance in decision making process in question rather than the respondents themselves);

- significant differences in the tourist decisions made by the families with children who are the initiators, advisors or decision-makers and other families whose children do not play such roles referred to the significance of the following determinants of the choice of destination: monuments, cost of transport, time needed for travel (domestic trips) and security (abroad trips);
- significant differences in the tourist decisions made by the families with children who are the initiators, advisors or decision-makers and other families whose children do not play such roles referred to the significance of the following determinants of the choice of destination: the weather (domestic trips) and the offer of high culture institutions (abroad trips).

The findings that stem from the research project described in this article should be treated as significant, particularly due to the fact that „Family tourism is predicted to grow more than other forms of leisure travel because it represents a way to reunite the family and for family members to spend quality time with each other, away from the demands of everyday life” (Schänzel, Yeoman, 2014, p. 357). Bearing in mind the fact that families are changing, the role of children in the family decision-making is changing as well. Thus, the patterns of tourist behaviour are changing, too – there is the need to verify the aforementioned phenomena in order to determine the emerging trends in the studied field.

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