Conceptualising and Measuring Culture in Surveys: Case Study in the Republic of Croatia

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Abstract

The issue of culture as a specific resource is an interdisciplinary one. It can be addressed in various different contexts by a variety of surveys. In this paper, the authors base their discussion on economic sociology and cultural studies, leaning additionally on economics and applied business studies on one and economic geography on the other hand. When attempting to conceptualise and measure the construct "culture", the interdisciplinary nature of the topic is recognised as a major disadvantage, since different disciplines adopted different definitions of the term. In order to account for these differences, it is necessary to develop several measurement instruments. In the framework of this paper, the authors aim (1) to develop a measurement instrument accounting for individuals' interest in specific cultural goods, and (2) to measure culture as one of the personal values.

1 Introduction

The topic of **culture** is an interdisciplinary one. It can be addressed in various different contexts and settings. Williams (1998) enumerates three different groups of definitions, thereby accounting for several scientific disciplines (e.g. philosophy and sociology):

- **Ideal**, where culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values. The analysis of culture, if such a definition is accepted, is essentially the discovery and description, in

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lives and works, of those values that can be seen to compose a timeless order, or to have permanent reference to the universal human condition.
- **Documentary**, where culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are recorded.
- **Social**, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour.

Lately, culture has also been increasingly recognised as the main frame of reference for regional analysis and planning (see e.g. Ellger, 2001). It could therefore be argued that dimensions of culture within an urban landscape, as well as cultural economics, should be studied in the context of urban economic development. The term **cultural industries** was introduced in the 1980s (O'Connor, 2000) and pertains to "those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" (Fleming, 1999). Using economic terminology, **culture** could be defined through processes of production, distribution and consumption of cultural goods (O'Connor, 1999; Pratt, 2001); **cultural goods** being primarily symbolic goods whose economic value is derived from their cultural value.

Processes of production and distribution are analysed by several researchers (see e.g. Certeau, 1998; DiMaggio, 1998; Hall, 1998; Fiske, 1998; or Lovell, 1998), although estimates of potential demand for diverse cultural goods (expressed in monetary terms or as measurement scale scores) are given practically no attention. We, however, believe that it is necessary to develop and test a measurement instrument, which would effectively account for individuals' interest in specific cultural goods (especially in conjunction with the system of personal values, which to a great degree determine individuals' lifestyle). Our efforts stem from conviction that learning how to manage a demand for cultural goods by applying tools and tracking techniques of an increasingly sophisticated market analysis could be both crucial to the survival of various cultural industries and a necessary prerequisite of cultural economy development (O'Connor, 2000).

Several practical initiatives confirm our point of view, most notably the one introduced in New England at the turn of the century under the name **Creative Economy**[5]. The initiative represents a fundamental component of New England regional economic environment, and supports a new way of looking at the arts and culture as an industry cluster in much the same way as the financial services and

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[5] The Creative Economy initiative is an effort to learn about and leverage the growing importance of arts and culture on the economic life of New England (New England Council Report, 2000).

technology industry clusters are viewed (Gottlieb, 2000). The initiative has three key components:

- The creative cluster, defined as those enterprises and individuals that directly and indirectly produce cultural products (goods and services).
- The creative workforce, defined as the thinkers and doers trained in specific cultural and artistic skills that drive the success of leading industries that include, but are not limited to, arts and culture.
- The creative community, defined as a geographic area with a concentration of creative workers, creative business and cultural organisations.

Gottlieb (2000) points out that this initiative should provide a signature and identity for the area. It should draw visitors and upgrade the city's quality of life, which is determined by several factors, with the arts and culture near the top of the list along with quality of education, public safety and affordable housing. In addition, Fleming (1999) highlights the importance of developing the district as a cultural resource, a place to visit, even a tourist attraction. He realises the importance of cultural consumption as a lever for urban regeneration and basis for cultural production, redeveloping the built fabric, providing conditions for creative exchange, bringing more people into the area with disposable incomes, creating an image and ambience for the area, etc.

2 Measuring culture: Concept and methodology

2.1 Culture and cultural consumption

The fact that individual consumers of cultural goods (more or less actively) participate in processes of cultural consumption places these processes in the group of high-contact personal services (Ograjenšek, 2002). This has important implications for service providers active in cultural industries (both non-profit institutions and small entrepreneurs). They need access to managerial, financial and human resources; they have to deal with copyright issues, taxation and insurance; they need to explore opportunities to build partnerships at the local, national and international levels, etc. As far as an effective marketing strategy for cultural businesses and products is concerned, Fleming (1999) points out that it should be delivered at the "cultural city" level (meaning that it should be broad, based on a myriad of different logically intertwined products).

In order to develop an effective marketing strategy, the determinants and logic of cultural consumption should be explored. We selected development of a measurement instrument, based on the ideas from the Creative Economy initiative and thus applicable in the urban context, as a starting point for such exploration. In the process, culture was conceptualised as a set of commonly held values and interaction patterns.

2.2   Research setting and sample

In the framework of this paper, the issue of culture is studied in the context of urban economic development, with the population of the Croatian city of Osijek as a sample frame. However, as pointed out by Gottlieb (2000), a similar research could also be conducted in the following settings:

- Large cities, where first-class museums, performing arts institutions and businesses demand extraordinary talent and resources.
- Low-income neighbourhoods, where cultural activities play a larger part in community empowerment, enterprise development and revitalisation.
- Smaller, industrial cities and towns, with rich heritage and traditions and the challenge of rebuilding an economic base that has eroded over time.
- Rural communities, and the independent artisans and educators who make a living through export, as well as infusions of tourists and second homeowners who seek and support seasonal arts activity.

After choosing Osijek as a research setting, two out of seven **Areas for Action** presented in Fleming's (1999) **Best-Practice Model for Local Cultural Industry** (see Figure 1) were selected as focus areas of our research project.
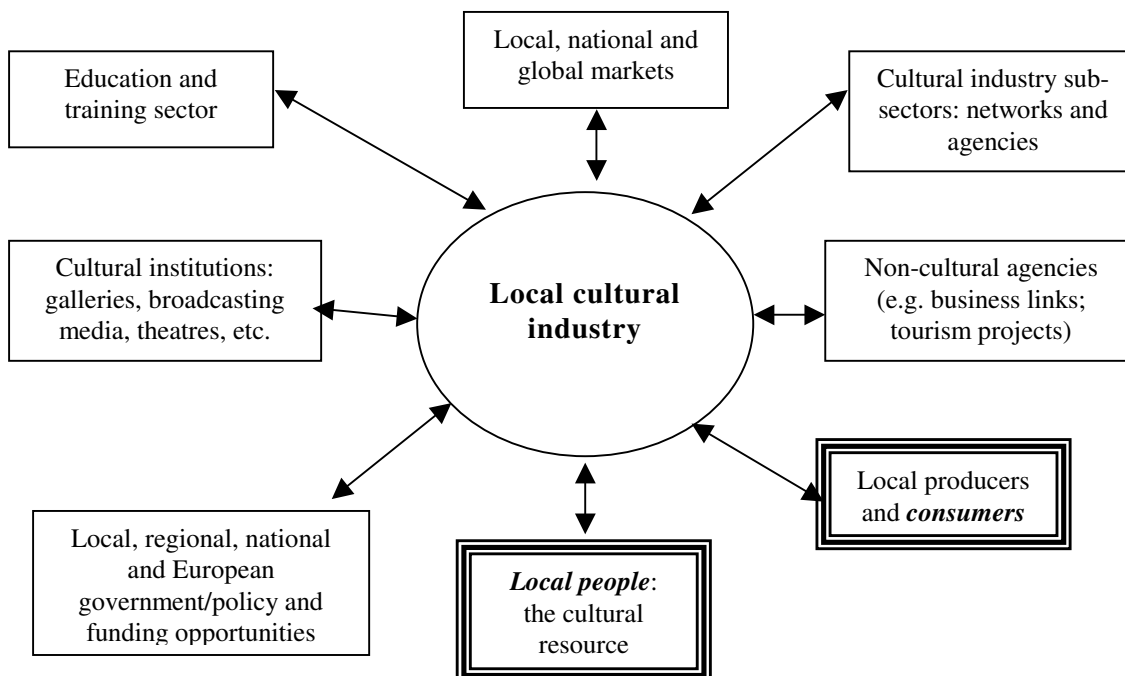

Figure 1: Fleming's Best-Practice Model for Local Cultural Industry (Fleming, 1999).

Such choice is in line with the third segment identified in the Creative Economy initiative namely the sector of creative community. According to Gottlieb (2000), this sector:

- demonstrates a positive effect on quality of life, which is key to attracting and retaining businesses, employees, residents and visitors;
- inspires downtown revitalisation as more municipalities integrate culture in their planning efforts;
- can be found in big cities as well as small towns of regions nationally recognised for their artistic and cultural activities.

Our survey was carried out in April 2002. A series of face-to-face interviews were conducted with randomly chosen respondents. Their socio-demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample.

Socio-demographic variable	Values	N (472)	Valid % *
Age	16 – 22	86	18.4
	23 – 32	113	24.2
	33 – 42	109	23.3
	43 – 52	94	20.1
	53 – 70	65	13.9
	Missing	*(5)*	
Gender	Male	195	41.3
	Female	277	58.7
Completed education	Primary school	33	7.0
	High school	256	61.4
	University education	152	32.3
	Postgraduate education	30	6.4
	Missing	*(1)*	
Marital status	Not married	213	45.2
	Married	215	45.6
	Divorced / Widowed	41	9.1
	Missing	*(1)*	
Employment status	Pupil	18	3.8
	Student	84	17.8
	Unemployed	17	3.6
	Retired	21	4.5
	Employed	331	70.3
	Missing	*(1)*	

Legend: * Calculations based solely on valid answers (missing values excluded).

2.3   Measurement instruments

Two different measurement instruments were used in our survey, the first striving to account for individuals' interest in specific cultural goods, the second aiming to measure culture as one of the personal values.

   The first measurement instrument is based on Gottlieb's (2000) seven categories of cultural goods:

- Category 1: Applied Arts (graphic design, architecture, industrial design, crafts, advertising, interior design, photography, web design).
- Category 2: Performing Arts (music, theatre, dance).
- Category 3: Visual Arts (painting, sculpture, galleries, auction houses).
- Category 4: Literary Arts (writing, publishing, reading).
- Category 5: Media (broadcasting media: cable, radio, television music, film production).
- Category 6: Heritage (museums, historic sites).
- Category 7: Advocacy and Support (education, cultural councils, fund-raising activities).

When developing our questionnaire, the first and the seventh category were omitted since it was necessary to adapt the questionnaire to characteristics of the cultural production in the city of Osijek. The final version of the questionnaire contains 18 items (see Appendix for the list) which is in line with Bearden et al.'s (1993) suggestion to keep items short and simple since increased questionnaire simplicity favourably influences reliability of reponse.

   A five-point Likert scale was used to measure individuals' interest in each of the items, following the gradation of PII - Personal Involvement Inventory (Zaichowsky, 1993):

   5   …   very interested in the specified cultural good
   4   …   interested in the specified cultural good
   3   …   neither interested nor uninterested in the specified cultural good
   2   …   not interested in the specified cultural good
   1   …   not interested in the specified cultural good at all

   The second measurement instrument is a modified version of the scale described in Marsden (1994). It consists of 10 items for measurement of personal values (one of them being culture). The use of this measurement instrument was prompted by our wish to understand the importance of values and value-derived activities in respondents' everyday life (with special emphasis placed on the importance of cultural consumption).

   The original instrument consists of 8 items with the following introductory text: "I'm going to read you a list of some things that different people value. Some people say these things are very important to them. Other people say they are not

so important. Please tell me how important each thing is to you personally, using the responses on this card. How about being financially secure? Is it very important (5), important (4), neither nor (3), not important (2) and not important at all (1)?"

Apart from financial security, the list includes the following items:

… being self-sufficient and not having to depend on others
… having faith in God
… having a fulfilling job
… having children
… being married
… being cultured
… having nice things

Following Klokovska's (1981) suggestion that difficulties in defining culture arise primarily from the polysemy of the term culture, its wide and incoherent volume, we replaced the item "being cultured" by three more precisely defined items:

… having general culture
… visiting cultural happenings
… having high education

According to Marsden (1994) rather than forcing respondents to an "all-or-nothing" response a rating scale should be used for measurement of personal values. In doing that the possibility that cultural values may be shared – to varying degrees – by all members of a society (a state of affairs assumed by Rokach, 1973) is recognised. Hence, we decided to use a five-point LOV - List of Values (Kahle, 1993) scale ranging from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important).

3   Evaluation of measurement instruments

3.1   Exploratory factor analysis

Our exploratory analysis consisted of the following steps:
- application of factor analysis;
- examination of scale reliability using Cronbach's alpha;
- examination of scale validity on the basis of two socio-demographic variables (completed education and gender).

In case of **the first measurement instrument** (interest in cultural goods), the Principal Axis Factoring was used as extraction method, followed by the Varimax

rotation. The three extracted factors were named **traditional cultural** factor, **film and extra-education** factor, and **mass-media** factor (see Table 2).

Table 2: Factor analysis of 18 items measuring interest in cultural goods.

Item	F1	F2	F3
(ind1_1) Visiting galleries (3. category)	0.763		
(ind1_2) Visiting painting exhibitions (3. category)	0.761		
(ind1_3) Visiting opera performances in theatre (2. category)	0.749		
(ind1_4) Visiting classical music concerts (2. category)	0.744		
(ind1_5) Visiting drama performances in theatre (2. category)	0.716		
(ind1_6) Visiting theatre premieres (2. category)	0.715		
(ind1_7) Visiting book promotions (4. category)	0.714		
(ind1_8) Reading classical literature (4. category)	0.685		
(ind1_9) Visiting concerts in cathedral (2. category)	0.637		
(ind1_10) Reading works of regional contemporary writers (4. category)	0.590		
(ind1_11) Visiting Children's' theatre (2. category)	0.500		
(ind2_1) Visiting cinema (5. category)		0.693	
(ind2_2) Watching video or DVD movies (5. category)		0.689	
(ind2_3) Attending courses (7. category)		0.540	
(ind2_4) Earning additional education qualifications (7. category)		0.427	
(ind3_1) Reading magazines (5. category)			0.746
(ind3_2) Reading newspaper (5. category)			0.622
(ind3_3) Watching TV (5. category)			0.347
Variance percent	*35.240*	*12.339*	*7.896*
Cumulative percent	*35.240*	*47.579*	*55.474*
Cronbach's alpha	*0.9115*	*0.6953*	*0.5700*

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin Measure of Sampling Adequacy 0.882 (Approx. Chi-Square =3558.581, sig. 0.000)

Table 3 gives a detailed insight into differences between factor means due to different socio-demographic characteristics of sample units.

Almost 35% of the variance is explained by the first factor, and Cronbach's alpha is exemplary (Bearden, Netemeyer and Mobley, 1993). The items loading on the first factor are derived from the second, third and fourth of Gottlieb's categories (Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Literary Arts). These constitute what O'Connor (2000) refers to as **traditional arts** (visual art, crafts, theatre, music theatre, concerts and performance, literature, museums and galleries – all those activities which have been eligible for public funding as "art") as opposed to "**classical" cultural industries** (broadcast media, film, publishing, recorded music, design, architecture, other new media). Hence the name of the first factor ("traditional cultural"). Although extracted as separate latent dimensions with minimal and moderate Cronbach's alpha, the other two factors (film and extra-education factor, mass-media factor) basically correspond to O'Connor's "classical" cultural industries.

Table 3: Factor means according to socio-demographic variables.

Socio-demographic variable	Values	F1	F2	F3
Age	16 – 22	2.76	3.90	3.78
	23 – 32	3.06	3.97	3.76
	33 – 42	3.35	3.73	3.74
	43 – 52	3.26	3.46	3.84
	53 – 70	3.15	3.01	3.94
Gender	Female	3.36	3.73	3.78
	Male	2.80	3.56	3.83
Completed education	Primary school	2.28	3.50	3.93
	High school	3.02	3.71	3.82
	2-year post secondary	3.18	3.44	3.78
	University education	3.52	3.69	3.80
	Postgraduate education	3.60	3.68	3.56
Marital status	Not married	2.95	3.83	3.76
	Married	3.21	3.54	3.83
	Divorced	3.56	3.43	3.76
	Widowed	3.68	3.39	4.15
Employment status	Pupil	1.92	3.74	3.87
	Student	2.98	3.95	3.77
	Unemployed	3.05	3.80	3.96
	Pensioner	3.16	3.02	4.06
	Employed	3.23	3.01	3.78

The analysis of variance was conducted in order to test the (group) validity of the measurement instrument. Regarding the **age of the respondents** F-test for the first factor was $F_{(4,456)}=10.314$, $p<0.01$, and for the second factor $F_{(4,456)}=34.651$, $p<0.01$. For the variable **education** F-test for the first factor was $F_{(4,460)}=24.98$, $p<0.01$ and for the second factor $F_{(4,460)}=2.450$, $p<0.01$. For **marital status** F-test for the first factor was $F_{(3,461)}=12.154$, $p<0.01$ and for the second factor $F_{(3,461)}=11.011$, $p<0.01$. Last but not least, for the variable **gender** the t-test was $t=7.58$, $p<0.01$ for the first, and $t=2.450$, $p<0.01$ for the second factor. Obviously, the existence of statistically significant differences between groups with respect to selected socio-demographic variables can be confirmed for both factors. Hence also the confirmed validity of the measurement instrument.

In case of **the second measurement instrument** (for the list of items see Appendix) the same analytical procedure was used (Principal Axis Factoring in combination with the Varimax rotation). The following three factors were extracted: factor of materialistic values, cultural factor, and factor of traditional values (see Table 4).

Table 4: Factor loadings for personal values.

Item	F1	F2	F3
(ind1_1) Being financially secure	0.830		
(ind1_2) Being self-sufficient and not having to depend on others	0.606		
(ind1_3) Having a fulfilling job	0.589		
(ind2_1) Visiting cultural happenings		0.692	
(ind2_2) Having high education		0.660	
(ind2_3) Having general culture		0.484	
(ind2_4) Having nice things		0.323	
(ind3_1) Being married			0.750
(ind3_2) Having children			0.745
(ind3_3) Having faith in God			0.359
Variance percent	*27.232*	*11.072*	*6.282*
Cumulative percent	*27.232*	*38.304*	*44.586*
Cronbach's alpha	*0.7316*	*0.6533*	*0.6349*

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin Measure of Sampling Adequacy 0.756 (Approx. Chi-Square = 1125.920. sig. 0.000)

Table 5: Factor means according to socio-demographic variables.

Socio-demographic variables	Values	F1	F2	F3
Age	16 – 22	4.56	3.75	3.95
	23 – 32	4.61	3.67	3.94
	33 – 42	4.61	3.73	4.15
	43 – 52	4.47	3.65	3.84
	53 – 70	4.45	6.68	4.11
Gender	Female	4.60	3.75	4.02
	Male	4.49	3.62	3.95
Completed education	Primary school	4.46	3.52	4.10
	High school	4.55	3.68	3.93
	2-year post secondary	4.55	3.65	3.93
	University education	4.56	3.91	4.10
	Postgraduate education	4.68	3.85	4.12
Marital status	Not married	4.55	3.69	3.84
	Married	4.54	3.68	4.15
	Divorced	4.65	3.80	3.84
	Widowed	4.85	3.81	4.14
Employment status	Pupil	4.59	3.56	4.09
	Student	4.51	3.82	3.92
	Unemployed	4.53	3.57	3.86
	Pensioner	4.43	3.74	4.19
	Employed	4.58	3.68	4.00

The extracted factors account for 45% of the total variance. Their Cronbach's alphas are not exemplary, but rather extensive or even moderate. This is probably due to problems of imprecise scale item definition, which were reported by interviewers. In future studies we will try to eliminate the possibility of subjective item interpretation (e.g. the temporal dimension of the items 'having children' or 'being married') by using full sentences explaining the meaning of a given item in

detail as suggested by Fink (1995). Additionally, we will also have to consider the wording of the item number two ("being self-sufficient and not having to depend on others") since Churchil (1999) suggests that "and" may be perceived as either separating two alternatives or connecting two parts of a single alternative.

Table 5 gives a detailed insight into differences between factor means due to different socio-demographic characteristics of sample units.

In the framework of this paper, the **cultural factor** is given special attention. Results of ANOVA for this factor show statistically significant differences with regard to variables **education** ($F_{(4.463)}$=8.262, p<0.01). **employment status** ($F_{(4.463)}$=2.744, p<0.01) and **gender** (t=3.325, p<0.01).

3.2   Confirmatory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis conducted for both measurement instruments was only the first step in identifying latent dimensions. Using factor analysis in the first part of the paper, the intention was to identify the separate dimensions of the structure and then to determine the extent to which each variable is explained by each dimension (Hair et al., 1998). To confirm the extracted factors, variance analysis was applied, which showed statistically significant (and expected) differences on the basic socio-demographic variables.

In order to test the existence of the extracted factors formally, LISREL was used as a structural equation-modelling (SEM) program. This analytical technique allows the researcher to simultaneously estimate a measurement model, specifying relations between measured variables and underlying latent variables, and to specify structural relations among the latent variables. It is certainly true that SEM can estimate relationships among latent variables that account for the measurement error present in the indicator of the latent variables (Browne and Cudeck, 1993).

In the first testing attempt of the first measurement instrument, the model did not fit the data well. The analysis was repeated, but only on the first two factors. The decision to exclude the third factor from the repeated analysis was based on the following facts: the third factor has the lowest Cronbach's alpha value, the third indicator of the third factor resulted in the lowest factor score, the third factor only pools two variables.

The model is presented by the path-diagram, e.g., graphical portrayal of the complete set of relationships among the model's constructs. Causal relationships are depicted by straight arrows, with the arrow emanating from the predictor variable and the arrowhead "pointing" to the dependent construct or variable. Curved arrows represent correlations between constructs or indicators, but no causation is implied (see Figure 2).
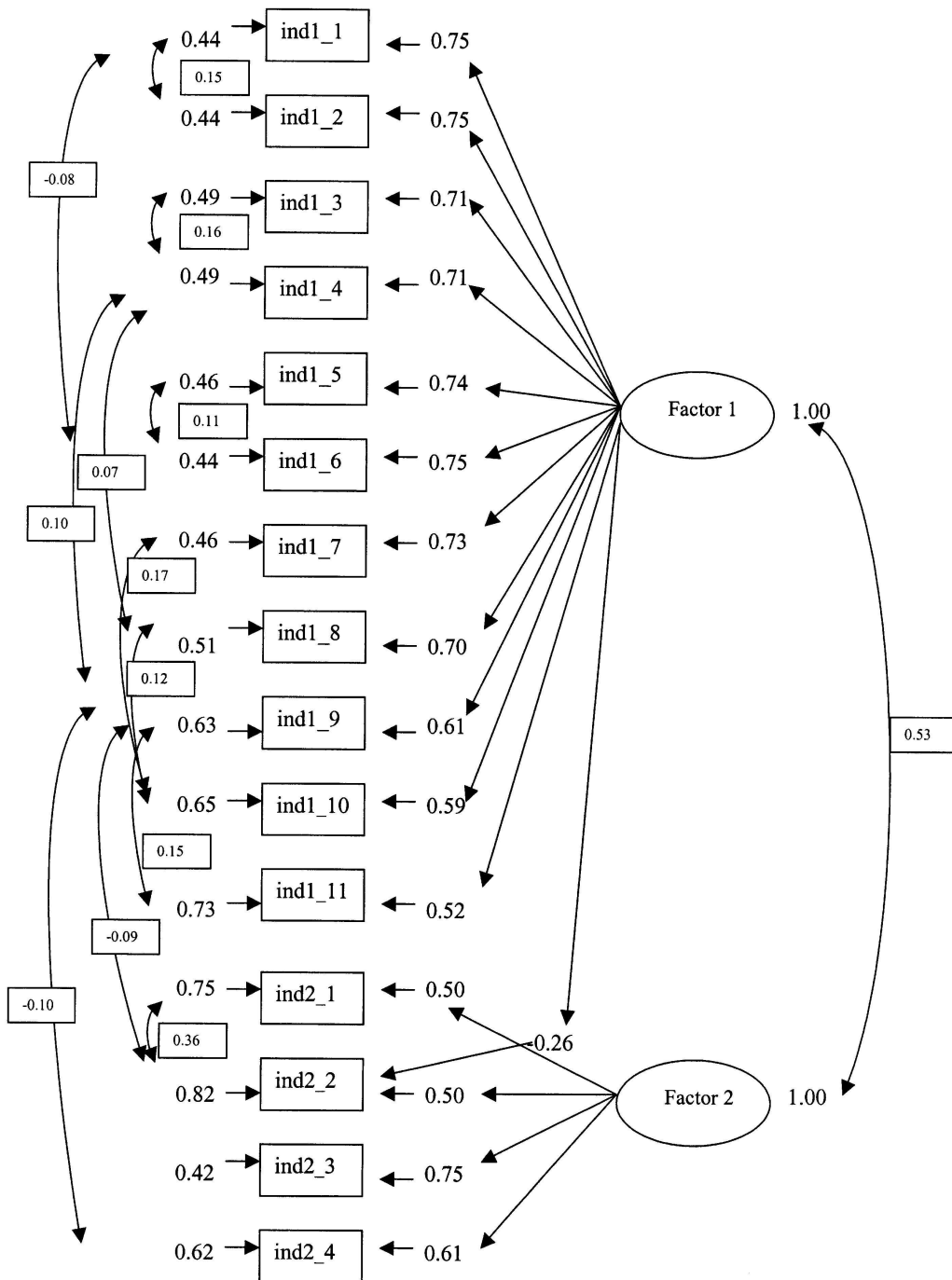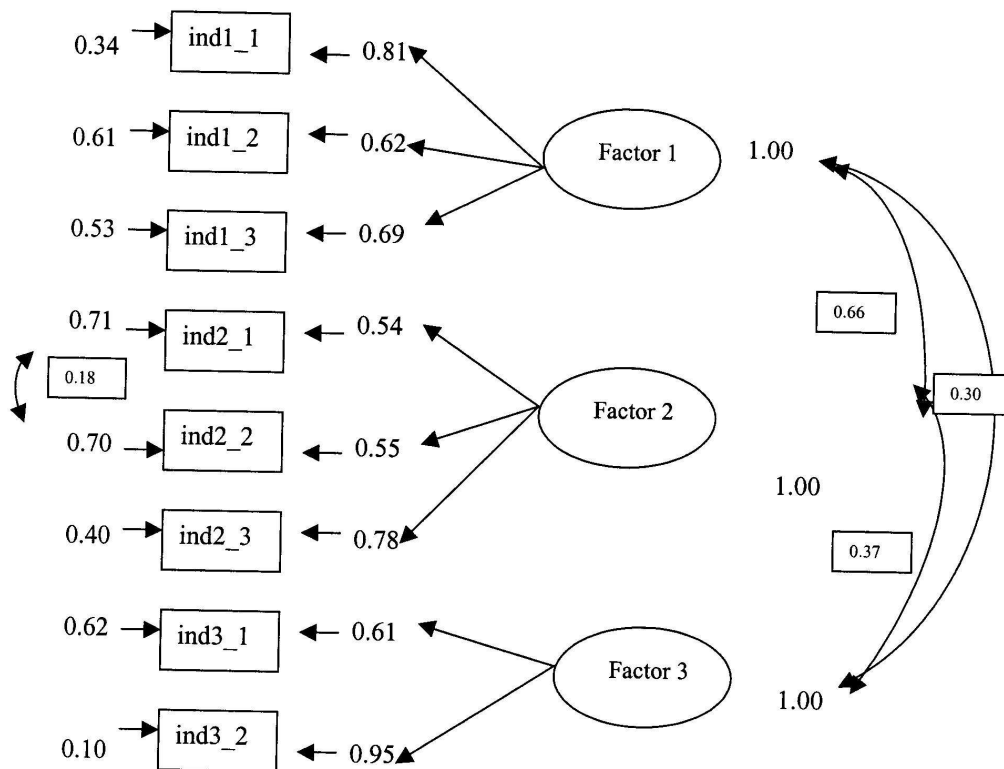
Figure 2: Path diagram for the first measurement instrument.

Having applied maximum likelihood estimation (RMSEA value goodness-of-fit), it can be said that the model fits the data good (RMSEA<0.05)[6]. However, the model should be criticised for its extremely high chi-square, and an extremely low p-value (almost 0). Furthermore, the model includes covariance matrix among indicator errors (Theta Delta). Covariance analysis indicates some non-predicted factors in the background.

While analysing **the second measurement instrument** there was no need for additional interventions on the identified factors by exploratory factor analysis. Applying maximum likelihood estimation by LISREL the path diagram was constructed (see Figure 3).

Given both goodness-of-fit measures it can be concluded that this model fits the data well.

Chi −square=38.67; df=17, p-value=0.00198; RMSEA=0.052

Figure 3: Path diagram for the second measurement instrument.

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[6] Browne and Cudeck (1993) suggest that an RMSEA value of 0.05 indicates a close fit and that values of up to 0.08 represent reasonable errors of approximation in the population.

4   Discussion and conclusions

O'Connor (2000) claims that cultural industries can generate economic success only if cultural intermediaries are using tools and tracking techniques of an increasingly sophisticated market analysis. In other words, in order to develop cultural goods that would find broad consumption, it is necessary to determine characteristics of demand for cultural goods and estimate its economic potential. To facilitate that, cultural intermediaries need access to managerial, financial and human resources. Additionally, they also need to explore opportunities to build partnerships at the local, national, and international levels in order to build effective marketing strategies.

In our view, an effective marketing strategy should be designed around individuals' understanding of culture as well as around determinants of cultural consumption. To explore them, we propose two measurement instruments, one dealing with individuals' interest in specific cultural goods, the other determining the placement of culture among personal values.

The results of exploratory factor analysis are in line with Gottlieb's and O'Connor's classifications of cultural goods. Statistically significant differences are shown to exist among different consumer groups with regard to their socio-demographic characteristics; a research finding that shows the need for future application of cluster and discriminant analysis in order to segment cultural consumers, profile the segments, and design an effective marketing strategy in accordance to cultural values and preferences of each identified consumer segment.

As far as the results of the confirmatory factor analysis are concerned, it could be ascertained that the first model (measuring individuals' interest in specific cultural goods) in its original form doesn't fit the data. Even in the reduced model there seem to be several non-predicted factors which still need to be accounted for.

The second model (focused on determining the placement of culture among personal values) fits the data much better. It seems that additional items, which upgraded the original measurement instrument proposed by Marsden (1994), perform their task well.

All in all, it could be concluded that the measurement instruments presented and discussed in this paper give a solid basis for future research efforts in the field where the nature of relationship between culture as a personal value and individuals' demand for specific cultural goods still remains elusive.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

1) "I'm going to read you a list of activities that different people practice doing in their free time. Please grade your interest in each of the following activities, using the responses on this card. How about visiting book promotions? Are you very interested (number 5 on the scale), interested (4), neither nor (3), not interested (2) and not interested at all (1)?" .

Full list of cultural goods (presented as activities):

… visiting book promotions	1	2	3	4	5
… visiting Children's' theatre	1	2	3	4	5
… visiting cinema	1	2	3	4	5
… reading classical literature	1	2	3	4	5
… visiting concerts in cathedral	1	2	3	4	5
… attending courses	1	2	3	4	5
… visiting drama performances in theatre	1	2	3	4	5
… earning additional education qualifications	1	2	3	4	5
… visiting galleries	1	2	3	4	5
… reading magazines	1	2	3	4	5
… visiting classical music concerts	1	2	3	4	5
… reading newspaper	1	2	3	4	5
… visiting opera performances in theatre	1	2	3	4	5
… visiting painting exhibitions	1	2	3	4	5
… visiting theatre premieres	1	2	3	4	5
… watching TV	1	2	3	4	5
… watching video or DVD movies	1	2	3	4	5
… reading works of regional contemporary writers	1	2	3	4	5

2) "I'm going to read you a list of some things that different people value. Some people say these things are very important to them. Other people say they are not so important. Please tell me

how important each thing is to you personally, using the responses on this card. How about being financially secure? Is it very important (5), important (4), neither nor (3), not important (2) and not important at all (1)?"

Full list of personal values:

… being self-sufficient and not having to depend on others   1 2 3 4 5
… being financially secure   1 2 3 4 5
… visiting cultural happenings   1 2 3 4 5
… having faith in God   1 2 3 4 5
… having a fulfilling job   1 2 3 4 5
… having children   1 2 3 4 5
… having high education   1 2 3 4 5
… being married   1 2 3 4 5
… having nice things   1 2 3 4 5
… having general culture   1 2 3 4 5

3) Demographic questions (age, gender, completed education, employment status, marital status).