

# A Scale for Measuring the Personality of Festivals

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## **Abstract**

This article reports the results of a study whose objective was to develop a scale for measuring the personality of cultural festivals. The scale was developed in four phases: generation of items, preliminary purification, secondary purification, and scale refinement. This last phase was accomplished by means of a survey of 191 adult consumers. The final scale is composed of 27 items that are grouped under five personality dimensions: *dynamism*, *sophistication*, *reputation*, *openness to the world*, and *innovation*. The results show that the proposed scale is reliable, that the labels used to describe its personality dimensions are adequate, and that it behaves properly within the context of self-image congruence theory.

## **Keywords**

Cultural festivals, personality, marketing of the arts, product images, marketing.

## **Background**

Marketing researchers and practitioners have long been interested in the mental images that consumers form of various commercial objects such as products, brands, and stores (Stern, Zinkhan, and Jaju, 2001). Part of marketing people's job consists in creating distinct images in consumers' mind in order to differentiate their offerings from those of competitors. In marketing, perception *is* the reality and managing consumers' mental representations is therefore a fundamental goal. In order to reach this goal, it is necessary to have measuring instruments with good psychometric properties (Churchill, 1979).

Recent image research in marketing has taken the position that consumers naturally attribute personality traits to commercial objects (Batra, Lehmann, and Singh, 1993). Fournier (1998) has argued that consumers see brands as relationship partners, just as in typical human interactions. Aaker (1997) has proposed that all brands can be positioned on five basic personality traits that she termed *sincerity*, *excitement*, *competence*, *sophistication*, and *ruggedness*. d'Astous and Lévesque (2003) have developed a store personality scale around five personality traits: *enthusiasm*, *sophistication*, *genuineness*, *solidity*, and *unpleasantness*.

There are good reasons for adopting a personality perspective when conducting image research in marketing. Firstly, as noted by Aaker (1997), it is a common practice in marketing to personify brands and products (e.g., the Green Giant, Mr. Clean, Aunt Jemima). Secondly, forming impressions of other people's personality is something natural and spontaneous (e.g., Asch, 1946) and, therefore, one can speculate that the processes by which such impressions are arrived at are relatively general. Thirdly, the personality perspective fits well with self-image congruence theory which proposes that consumers' preferences for products, brands, and other commercial objects are consistent with their self-image (see e.g., Graeff, 1996).

## Study Objective

The objective of this study was to develop a scale to measure the personality of festivals. The choice of festivals as the object of study was made for some specific reasons. The first concerns their ubiquity. There are all kinds of festivals around the world (a data base consisting of 40,000 festivals is available at [www.festivals.com](http://www.festivals.com)); some of them have an international reputation, like the Cannes festival, whereas others are strictly local. Because they are typical objects in the life of most consumers, festivals are therefore susceptible to activate relatively organized mental structures. Secondly, festivals are different from brands and stores for which personality scales have already been developed. Contrary to brands and stores, festivals are events that take place during a limited period of time. Their personality may therefore be based more on advertising, souvenirs, and expectations than on regular visits (in the case of stores) or usage (in the case of brands). Unlike brands and stores, festivals are public celebrations around overall themes like cinema, music, nature, or food (Getz, 1990). Their "consumption" is mainly social in that it is usually realized in communion with many other consumers who share the same interests. These social experiences take place outside consumers' normal environment and are highly hedonistic (Bourdeau, De Coster, and Paradis, 2001). These distinctive characteristics make festivals are very special type of product for consumers. Lastly, one should not ignore the important role that festivals play for a community. The very first thing that may come to consumers' mind when thinking about some city is its main festivals. For many people, a festival may indeed be the sole criterion for selecting a tourist destination. Consequently, knowing how a festival is perceived in terms of human traits can be useful to orient marketing actions aimed at improving the match between target consumers' self-perceptions and the personality of the festival.

## Method

The construction of the scale was realized in four phases which are described in the following paragraphs.

### Phase 1: Item Generation

The first phase of the research consisted in generating a list of adjectives that could potentially be used to characterize the personality of festivals. To this end, a focus group was conducted with five French-speaking adult consumers familiar with well-known festivals taking place in the city of Montréal in Canada. The participants were asked to come up with adjectives that they would use to describe the personality of these festivals. It was deemed appropriate to use a focus group at this stage given that festivals are fundamentally social events. This focus group was nevertheless followed by five individual interviews with different adult consumers familiar with the Montréal festivals. The adjectives that were generated with these two methods were combined with the items of d'Astous and Lévesque (2002) (store personality) as well as those of Ferrandi, Falcy, Kreziack, and Valette-Florence (1999) (brand personality) in order to augment the initial list of items. A few adjectives were added following a consultation of newspaper articles focusing on some Montréal festivals. After having eliminated redundant words, the initial list of adjectives was composed of 183 items.

### Phase 2: First Purification

Two methods were used to reduce the initial list of items. Firstly, five adult consumers who were very familiar with the Montréal festivals were asked to rate the relevance of each adjective for describing the personality of a festival on a four-point scale with the following anchors: no at all relevant, not very relevant, somewhat relevant, and very relevant. A majority rule was used to decide which adjectives should be eliminated: when at least three judges indicated that the adjective was not at all relevant or not very relevant, it was eliminated; when at least three judges indicated that it was somewhat relevant or very relevant, it was retained in the list. A total of 79 adjectives were eliminated following this procedure.

Secondly, when two words or more were synonyms, that having obtained the highest average relevance score from the judges was retained. This procedure was accomplished with the help of a very efficient on-line dictionary of synonyms (<http://elsap1.unicaen.fr/cgi-bin/cherches.cgi>) and resulted in the additional elimination of 19 adjectives.

### Phase 3: Second Purification

This third phase was accomplished by means of a survey of 74 adult consumers living in the city of Montréal or its surroundings. Although the survey participants formed a convenience sample (the authors' friends, neighbours, colleagues, family members, etc.), all were familiar with the following four Montréal festivals serving as stimuli: the Montréal International Jazz Festival, the Just for Laughs Festival, the Francolies de Montréal (Francophone music), and the World Film Festival.

The self-administered questionnaire contained a first section in which each festival had to be rated on the 85 personality adjectives using a five-point numeric scale with anchors does not describe the festival at all/totally describes the festival. This was followed by items aimed at measuring the respondents' (1) familiarity with and attitude toward the festivals, (2) involvement in festival activities, and (3) socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, occupation, education, income, marital status, number of children).

A series of factor analyses were conducted on the personality data in order to find an acceptable personality structure. This entailed several iterations in which items were deleted in order to come up with a consistent and interpretable factor solution. In the final stage, a varimax rotated five-factor structure emerged with a set of 29 items. Altogether, the five factors explained 57.2% of the total variance and each factor had a greater-than-one eigenvalue. These factors are presented in Table 1, along with their respective eigenvalue, proportion of explained variance, and reliability coefficient. The factors were given the following interpretation: dynamism (7 items), sophistication (6 items), openness to the world (5 items) reputation (5 items), and innovation (6 items)<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 1:  
Initial Factor Structure (Phase 3)**

<b>Factor name</b>	<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>Explained variance</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>Adjectives</b>
Dynamism	5.23	18.02%	0.93	High-spirited, energetic, welcoming, agreeable, dynamic, lively, joyous
Sophistication	4.43	15.26%	0.91	Intellectual, intelligent, educated, wise, cultured, sophisticated
Openness to the world	2.50	8.63%	0.83	Francophone, Quebecer, cosmopolitan, open to the world, open to different cultures
Reputation	2.49	8.60%	0.78	Imposing, reputable, successful, well-known, solid
Innovation	1.94	6.67%	0.73	Unpredictable, audacious, avant-gardist, creative, versatile, competitive

Additional factor analyses were conducted in order to test the stability of the factor solution across gender and festivals. The few differences that were observed between the sub-group solutions were minor and, consequently, the final personality structure was retained.

#### **Phase 4: Scale Refinement**

The final phase of the scale construction procedure was accomplished by means of a survey of adult consumers selected using an area sampling procedure. Three predominantly French-speaking urban districts of the city of Montréal were chosen for collecting the data. Streets were randomly selected in each district and interviewers knocked on the door of every two dwellings on these streets in order to secure the residents' participation. After providing appropriate instructions, the questionnaire was left with the person and a convenient time was set for later pickup.

A total of 961 dwellings were visited and 482 personal contacts were made (contact rate = 50.2%). Two-hundred and twenty-four contacted persons refused to participate, yielding an acceptance rate of 53.5%. From the 258 distributed questionnaires, 201 could be picked up and from this number 10 questionnaires had to be eliminated because they were badly completed. The final sample is therefore made of 191 participants.

In the first section of the questionnaire, the four stimulus festivals used in phase 3 had to be rated using the 29 adjectives defined in phase 3. A five-point numeric scale with anchors does not describe the festival at all/totally describes the festival was used to obtain these judgements. The order of presentation of the festivals varied systematically from one respondent to the other. In addition, four versions of the questionnaire corresponding to different orders of presentation of the items were used to partially control for order effects.

The second section of the questionnaire contained several measures. Respondents' familiarity with each festival was measured using a seven-point numeric scale with end points: do not know at all/know very well. Attitude toward each festival was measured using three seven-point numeric scales with end points: that I do not like/that I like, for which I have a negative opinion/for which I have a positive opinion, and I would not like to attend/I would like to attend. Respondents' involvement in cultural festivals in general was assessed with 10 items taken from Zaichkowsky's (1994) personal involvement inventory (unimportant/very important, uninteresting/very interesting, etc.). The following questions asked the person to estimate his or her average attendance of each stimulus festival when it was held. Following this, the respondent had to assess his or her own personality on the five previously defined dimensions: dynamism, sophistication, openness to the world, reputation, and innovation. For instance, in order to measure the person's perception on the dynamism dimension, the question was "Would you say that you are a dynamic person?" (five-point numeric scale with end points: not at all/totally). In the case of the reputation dimension, the question asked if the person saw him/herself as having success. The section concluded with direct personality evaluations of the four festivals on the five dimensions. For instance, "in general, the Montreal International Jazz Festival is dynamic" (five-point numeric scale with end points: not at all/totally). The third and last section of the questionnaire contained socio-demographics items.

#### **Results**

The results associated with the fourth phase of the scale construction process are detailed in the present section.

## **Sample Description**

The sample is about equally divided between female (51.8%) and male (48.2%) consumers. The participants were aged between 18 and 81 years with a mean of 40.1. As regards their level of education, 10.6% had some high school, 17.6% some college, and 71.8% had a university diploma. Respondents were relatively uniformly distributed among the different income categories: less than 20,000\$ (14.9%), 20,000-39,999\$ (21.1%), 40,000-59,999\$ (22.4%), 60,000-79,999\$ (13.0%), 80,000-99,999\$ (11.8%), 100,000\$ and more (16.8%). In comparison with census data, the survey participants were much better educated and had more income than in the general Canadian population.

## **Factor Analysis**

The scale items were factor analyzed with the principal axis factoring extraction method. Five factors were obtained using the greater-than-one eigenvalue criterion for factor extraction. The resulting varimax rotated factor solution did not conform exactly to the expected structure as a few items loaded more strongly on factors to which they were not supposed to belong. However, these items were also correlated almost as strongly with their appropriate factor. The expected factor structure was obtained after removing two adjectives from the list: Quebecer and competitive. The five factors accounted for 60.8% of the total variance and the pattern of loadings was consistent with the expected personality structure (see Table 2). The factors were (in order of decreasing explained variance): dynamism (7 items, average absolute loading = 0.76), sophistication (6 items, average absolute loading = 0.75), reputation (5 items, average absolute loading = 0.64), openness to the world (4 items, average absolute loading = 0.56), and innovation (5 items, average absolute loading = 0.49). The arithmetic mean of the items was computed to form an indicator of each festival personality dimension.

**Table 2:**  
**Final Factor Structure and Reliability Results**

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
	<i>Dynamism</i>	<i>Sophistication</i>	<i>Reputation</i>	<i>Openness</i>	<i>Innovation</i>
Joyous	<b>0.81</b>	-0.09	0.19	-0.06	0.18
High-spirited	<b>0.78</b>	-0.03	0.21	0.05	0.20
Welcoming	<b>0.78</b>	-0.09	0.13	-0.07	0.14
Dynamic	<b>0.77</b>	0.11	0.27	0.02	0.20
Energetic	<b>0.77</b>	0.07	0.28	0.08	0.14
Lively	<b>0.72</b>	0.00	0.28	0.06	0.11
Agreeable	<b>0.70</b>	0.18	0.12	0.06	0.22
Intellectual	-0.16	<b>0.79</b>	0.06	0.12	0.10
Sophisticated	0.01	<b>0.77</b>	0.15	0.18	0.08
Cultured	0.02	<b>0.77</b>	0.09	0.29	0.03
Educated	-0.05	<b>0.75</b>	0.13	0.19	0.14
Intelligent	0.19	<b>0.72</b>	0.14	0.18	0.22
Wise	0.10	<b>0.72</b>	0.13	0.06	0.19
Well-known	0.36	0.18	<b>0.71</b>	0.22	0.12
Reputable	0.31	0.19	<b>0.69</b>	0.22	0.17
Successful	0.53	0.13	<b>0.62</b>	0.13	0.07
Imposing	0.28	0.23	<b>0.61</b>	0.20	0.26
Solid	0.45	0.23	<b>0.57</b>	0.08	0.13
Open to the world	0.09	0.42	0.17	<b>0.69</b>	0.11
Open to cultures	-0.01	0.38	0.18	<b>0.67</b>	0.15
Cosmopolitan	0.18	0.39	0.23	<b>0.58</b>	0.09
Francophone	0.27	-0.07	-0.09	<b>-0.31</b>	-0.04
Avant-gardist	0.21	0.32	0.20	0.21	<b>0.61</b>
Audacious	0.37	0.19	0.19	0.16	<b>0.60</b>
Unpredictable	0.17	0.08	0.06	0.00	<b>0.48</b>
Creative	0.40	0.33	0.16	0.18	<b>0.43</b>
Versatile	0.33	0.33	0.13	0.28	<b>0.34</b>
Eigenvalue	10.04	4.71	1.50	1.20	0.96
% of variance	37.2	17.4	5.6	4.5	3.6
<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>	0.93	0.91	0.90	0.73	0.79
Alternate-form reliability	0.73 <sup>1</sup>	0.71	0.76	0.71	0.63

<sup>1</sup> Correlation between mean personality scores and direct judgments of festival personality.

### Reliability Assessment

Cronbach's coefficient alpha is reported for each personality dimension in Table 2. In addition, Table 2 displays the correlations between the personality indicators and respondents' direct judgements of the personality of the festival. These latter correlations serve as alternate-form estimates of reliability (Whitley, 2002) and also provide some evidence for the adequateness of the personality dimension labels. As can be seen in the table, coefficient alpha ranged from 0.73 to 0.93 whereas the alternate-form reliability estimates ranged from 0.63 to 0.76 (all correlations statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ ). Overall, it appears that the proposed personality scale dimensions are fairly reliable and that the labels used to describe them are adequate.

## **Validity Assessment**

The scale's validity was assessed using the procedure employed by d'Astous and Lévesque (2002). This procedure is based on the rationale that a valid measure should behave as predicted by a highly credible theoretical framework (see Nunnally, 1978). In the present case, the theoretical framework is self-image congruence theory, a widely accepted consumer behaviour theory which posits that consumers prefer products, brands, and other commercial objects whose perceived psychological characteristics are congruent with their own psychological characteristics (see e.g., Hawkins, Best, and Coney, 2004; Hoyer and MacInnis, 2004; Solomon, Zaichkowsky, and Polegato, 2005). Consistent with self-image congruence theory, a valid measure of festival personality would imply that the attitude toward a festival is more favourable when the distance between the festival's personality characteristics and those of consumers is small.

In order to test this prediction, the absolute distance between the survey respondents' mean festival personality score and self-judgements of personality was computed for each personality dimension and averaged over the five dimensions. The resulting average distances were correlated with the participants' attitude toward the festivals. This latter attitude measure corresponded to the mean of three attitude items previously described ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ). Consistent with the prediction of self-image congruence theory, the correlation between the personality distance index and the attitude measure across the four festivals was negative ( $r = -0.31$ ) and statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). When considering each festival separately, the correlation was negative and statistically significant in the case of the Just for Laughs Festival ( $r = -0.38$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), the Francofolies de Montréal ( $r = -0.25$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), as well as the World Film Festival ( $r = -0.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, in the case of the Montréal International Jazz Festival, the correlation was null and not significant. An examination of the attitude measure toward this specific festival revealed that it was much more favourable (mean = 5.43) and had less variance (standard deviation = 1.30) than that of the other festivals (Just for Laughs Festival: mean = 4.47, s.d. = 1.64; Francofolies de Montréal: mean = 4.70, s.d. = 1.37; World Film Festival: mean = 4.44, s.d. = 1.47). The results of a repeated-measure analysis of variance confirmed that the attitude differences between the festivals were statistically significant (omnibus  $F = 22.12$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and that they were mainly localised in the jazz festival versus the other festivals contrast (no significant mean difference when considering only the three latter festivals). Therefore, the non observation of a significant correlation in the case of the jazz festival appears to be caused by a lack of variance in the attitude measure caused by a ceiling effect. Overall then, it can be concluded that the festival personality scale behaves as predicted by self-image congruence theory, a result which brings some empirical support for its construct validity.

## **Positioning and Preference Analysis**

The personality scale developed in this study can be used for positioning festivals and for deriving marketing strategies aimed at influencing consumer attitudes. These applications are briefly illustrated in this section.

Table 3 displays the mean position of the festivals used as stimuli in this study on each uncovered personality dimension. On the basis of these means, it can be concluded that



the Montréal International Jazz Festival is well positioned on all personality dimensions. It distinguishes itself particularly from the other festivals by its better reputation. While the Just for Laughs Festival is seen as the least sophisticated, it is well positioned on dynamism. The Francolies de Montréal festival does not excel on any personality dimension, except perhaps for dynamism, although on this aspect its position is only better than that of the World Film Festival. This latter festival is perceived as lacking dynamism, but it gets good ratings on openness to the world.

**Table 3:**  
**Mean Position of the Stimulus Festivals on the Personality Dimensions**

	Factor 1 Dynamism	Factor 2 Sophistication	Factor 3 Reputation	Factor 4 Openness	Factor 5 Innovation
<i>International Jazz Festival</i>	4.06	3.65	4.46	4.22	3.60
<i>Just for Laughs Festival</i>	4.09	2.62	3.66	3.06	3.41
<i>Francofolies de Montréal</i>	3.75	3.23	3.52	3.04	3.17
<i>World Film Festival</i>	2.85	3.69	3.14	3.91	3.21

Table 4 presents the results of a preference regression analysis carried out for each festival. This analysis consisted in regressing the attitude toward the festival measure on each personality dimension in order to estimate their relative contribution in enhancing consumer attitudes (Urban and Hauser, 1983). The table displays the statistically significant (only) standardized regression coefficients. These coefficients give some indication of the relative importance of the personality dimensions. This in turn has implications regarding the emphasis that each festival should put on promoting certain personality characteristics.

**Table 4**  
**Preference Regression Analyses<sup>1</sup>**

Preference Regression Analyses <sup>1</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Factor 1 Dynamism	Factor 2 Sophistication	Factor 3 Reputation	Factor 4 Openness	Factor 5 Innovation
Festival						
<i>Jazz Festival</i>	0.18	0.27	0.26	--	--	--
<i>Just for Laughs</i>	0.50	0.16	0.27	--	--	0.27
<i>Francofolies</i>	0.28	0.22	--	0.20	0.17	--
<i>World Film</i>	0.25	--	--	0.29	0.15	--

<sup>1</sup> The entries correspond to statistically significant standardized regression coefficients. The dependent variable is the attitude toward the festival. All regression models are statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

Judging from the results presented in Table 4, it appears that the Montreal International Jazz Festival should promote both its dynamism and its sophistication among festivalgoers in order to influence positively their attitudes and, eventually, their desire to participate in the festival's activities. The Just for Laughs Festival should also insist on its sophistication and to a lesser extent on its dynamism, but the results suggest that its innovative character should be emphasized, especially because it is the only festival for which this personality characteristic has a significant impact. The Francofolies de Montréal should try to change its "local" festival image perhaps by stressing the fact that some of its performers are international artists. This might have an effect on its perceived reputation, a dimension which also has a positive impact on consumer attitudes toward this festival. Finally, the World Film Festival should focus on marketing strategies aimed at increasing its reputation among consumers.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Cultural festivals exist in almost every city in the world. These events often represent a major attraction for residents and tourists, and have generally significant economic impacts for hotels, restaurants, and retailers. It is therefore important to understand and manage the processes which underlie the formation of the images that consumers form of festivals, because attitudes and the desire to participate to festival activities partly depend on these mental representations. The festival personality scale developed in this study may serve as a useful tool to position a festival on some basic human traits. The resulting information may be used to assess the effectiveness of some positioning strategies, to develop new positioning strategies, and to make comparisons with competing festivals. By estimating the relationships between the personality dimensions and consumer preferences through regression analysis, it is possible to identify the dimensions that contribute most to enhance festivalgoers' attitudes. These analyses can be carried out for specific sub-groups (e.g., tourists versus residents, intensive versus occasional participants) in order to identify possible segmentation strategies.

The festival personality scale described in this article should not be considered as the sole procedure to study the images of festivals. As consumers' attitudes toward festivals are likely to depend on several types of attributes in addition to human traits (e.g., program activities, timing, accommodations, costs), the scale should be seen as a complement to other conventional perceptual mapping techniques (see e.g., Dolan, 1999). What makes the festival personality scale unique is the fact that its underlying dimensions are as pertinent for a festival as they are for a person. Thus, self-image congruence analyses like those presented in this article can be employed to orient marketing actions aimed at improving the match between target consumers' self-perceptions and festival personality.

This study has obviously important methodological limitations which should be kept in mind when contemplating the utilization of the scale for application or research purposes. Firstly, it was conducted in a single city, using a limited number of stimulus festivals. Therefore, it would be necessary to carry out additional studies in other locations and with different festivals in order to increase the scale's external validity. Secondly, because the scale was originally developed in the French language, the translations that were provided in this article should be submitted to some validation procedure before they are used as such or before they are translated in another

language. Because festivals are events that take place all over the world, a single-language scale is not a realistic option anyway.

This study is believed to be the first attempt at the development of a reliable and valid instrument to measure the personality of festivals. It is hoped that it will stimulate further research aimed at improving the proposed scale, testing its applicability in different cultures and its extension possibilities to other types of cultural events, as well as at increasing our knowledge of the processes by which consumers form images of festivals and of art/culture products in general.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The original adjectives in French language can be obtained by contacting the authors.

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