

Flamenco Performer's Perceived Value: Development of a Measurement Index

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Abstract

This paper aims to explain the main elements influencing the perceived value of the flamenco performer. In the framework of cultural economics, it presents a methodology based on two stages: interviews to experts, to identify the different aspects which influence the value of the performer; and surveys to consumers, to measure the valuation of stated aspects. The data from surveys were used for an exploratory factor analysis which results identified three factors that influence the perceived value of the performer: virtuosity, feelings, and influencer-brand. The conclusions also show that among these factors, virtuosity may be used as a synthetic index of performer valuation, since it represents more than 42% of the accumulated total variance. Due to its findings the article is a useful instrument for researchers in cultural economics, art sociology, consumer studies, and empirical aesthetics.

Keywords: perceived value; performer; flamenco; exploratory factor analysis; virtuosity.

JEL classification: Z11

1. INTRODUCTION

Both economists and music researchers suggest that the performer is an important intervening agent of the flamenco work (Romero, 1996; Cleeremans *et al.*, 2016; Heredia-Carroza *et al.*, 2019a). They complete the creation process of given work with its externalization (Gorton and Ostersjo, 2016; McNeil, 2017), which allows it to reach most of the audience who, at the same time, give it an appreciation (Felton, 1978; Bourdieu, 1984).

Due to this importance, the article, which applies to the case of flamenco in Spain, takes an empirical approach to measure its perceived value through distinguishable elements. In the framework of cultural economics, the aspects that influence the valuation of the flamenco performer were identified by interviewing experts. These aspects were valued by 586 consumers of flamenco (Noonan, 2003), and subjected to an analysis of correlations and exploratory factor analysis by principal components, that identified three factors that represent the elements that influence the perceived value of the performer in flamenco

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(Tschacher *et al.*, 2015; Heredia-Carroza *et al.*, 2018). The three factors are virtuosity, feelings, and influencer-brand. The main result shows how virtuosity is the key element in the valuation, as it represents more than 42% of the accumulated total variance.

The article contributes to empiric literature on valuation of music in three courses: a) identifying the most important aspects of flamenco's performers, b) measuring the perceived value of the flamenco performer through a synthetic index using its main factor: virtuosity, and with it c) offering the music industry a decision-making instrument for future signings of performers in record companies.

2. FLAMENCO PERFORMER'S PERCEIVED VALUE

A number of notions regarding the influence of the performer to the work are studied in cultural economics. Some authors analyse this impact inherent to evaluation of the work and performer's capacity to infer a consumer experience (Cleeremans *et al.*, 2016; Hernando and Campo, 2017b). However, in the absence of empirical research that analyses the performer's perceived value, this study looks at how flamenco consumers use their perceptions to assess the value of the performer in the flamenco market.

Flamenco is a traditional popular music genre with its own characteristics such as: aesthetics, performance, and socio-cultural significance, amongst others. Its wealth and variety can be observed from its three types of artistic manifestations such as *cante* –vocal music– *toque* –instrumental music– and *baile* –art of dancing (Heredia-Carroza *et al.*, 2019a). However, one of the most relevant features of flamenco is its consideration as an *arte vivo* due to its oral tradition. For this reason, the performers are considered as fundamental part of the creation process of the flamenco work.

Traditionally, the learning process of flamenco performers has been empirical in its three types of artistic manifestations: *cante*, *toque* and *baile*. Flamenco is learned through others or from sound recordings, musical scores are rarely used for this purpose (MacQueen and Peacock, 1995; Donnier, 2011). In the performance, the performer assumes a crucial role over what is written and memorised.

However, researchers have often studied the factors associated with music like audience and attendance. For them, the primary success indicant of the performers is directly proportional to the income distributors perceive (Wallace *et al.*, 1993), focusing only on the monetary value. This paper on the other hand, is focused in other indicant of success: the perceived value of flamenco performers. For that purpose, it is necessary to explain the creation process of the flamenco work and the specific role the performers play.

Flamenco's work creation process starts when the author resorts to a pre-existing creative source known as cultural heritage. The author would then add personal elements producing a musical composition, and finally the performer, through its externalisation, completes the creation process (Heredia-Carroza *et al.*, 2019b). In the process, the composition's features combine with the performer's talent that enables the recreation of what the author set.

The aspects arising from its talent have an effect in the perceived value of the work, but also in the perceived value of the performer. Knowledge gained through this paper might help unveil the mechanism at play in flamenco consumers' perceived value of the performer. The next section presents these aspects.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to measure the performer's perceived value. The methodology, which develops a measurement scale, combines qualitative and quantitative instruments: interviews to experts and surveys to consumers, respectively. The first one, helped identify the aspects that make up the perceived value of the performer. The second one, allowed consumers to value given aspects.

3.1 Interviews

In order to identify which aspects have an effect on the perceived value of the performer, 15 of the most outstanding flamenco and Spanish music industry experts were interviewed (Arboleda and Gonzalez, 2016; Heredia-Carroza *et al.*, 2017).

Based on existing bibliography (Cruces Roldan, 2001; Radbourne *et al.*, 2010; Towse, 2007), the interviews were structured in three parts: first, they inquired about the elements that influence the perceived value of the work and the performer, and affect their success (Hadida, 2010); the second part deepened on copyright issues and, finally, a general section dedicated to future studies. This paper uses the information related with the performer obtained in the first part of the interviews.

The interviewed experts are: authors who also perform the three flamenco manifestations; politicians responsible of cultural affairs, like the former counsellor of Culture in Andalusia; representatives of the two most important copyright entities in Spain: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores (SGAE) and Asociación de Artistas, Intérpretes y Ejecutantes (AIE); cultural managers of important flamenco festivals such as “Bienal de Flamenco de Sevilla” and the “Festival de Jerez de la Frontera”, amongst others.

Each interview lasted from 60 to 90 minutes and they were carried between January and May 2017. The selection criteria of the interviewed experts were their relevance, considering specifically awards obtained in the case of artists, the festivals they directed in the case of cultural managers and the level of responsibility with regard to cultural-related themes. Appendix I provide the list of the interviewed experts.

Finally, the aspects identified by the interviews were grouped according to existing bibliography and resulted on the following list:

- Artistic variables: distinctive element, technique, improvisation, musical repertoire, consistency and innovation of the performance (Márquez Limón, 2017).
- Feeling variables: generate reflection in spectators, ability to feel flamenco, and ability to make others feel flamenco (Vartanian and Suedfeld, 2011; Heredia-Carroza *et al.*, 2018).
- Consumer behavior variables: the theatre where the performer performs its work, its record and tickets sales (Werck and Heyndels, 2007; Zieba and O'Hagan, 2010).

3.2 Surveys

Once the different variables were grouped, a survey was designed to measure the perceived value of these variables. It was carried out between May and September 2017 on the website of *Flama. La guía del flamenco* that also had the disclosure of the *Centro Andaluz de Documentación del Flamenco* and *Promocionmusical.es* website. The survey was divided into four sections. In the first section, the consumers were asked about their

consuming habits. The second section contained questions related to the valuation of the flamenco work and its creators (author and performer). The third, examined cultural policy issues through four questions on public funding support for the promotion of flamenco. The final section inquired on socio-demographic aspects like age and education level, amongst others control variables.

The questions on section two, followed on a Likert scale from one to seven points, with an eighth 'do not know, non-response' option. In total, 586 consumers took the survey. Their observations created an *ad hoc* data base, with which empirical analysis on performer's perceived value have been undertaken. Table no. 1 presents the features of the sample and the variables used in the later empirical analysis.

Table no. 1 – Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
<i>Socio-demographic characteristics of participants</i>					
Age	586	2,65	1,37	1	5
Female	586	0,46	0,50	0	1
Male	586	0,54	0,50	0	1
Education level	586	4,04	1,21	1	5
<i>Flamenco cultural capital of participants</i>					
Knowledge about flamenco	586	3,88	1,45	1	7
They possess flamenco music	586	0,88	0,32	0	1
Time consuming flamenco	586	3,54	0,87	1	4
<i>Valued aspects of the flamenco performer</i>					
Distinctive element	574	6,01	1,33	1	7
Technique	571	5,70	1,44	1	7
Improvisation	568	5,87	1,40	1	7
Musical Repertoire	573	5,30	1,42	1	7
Consistency of the performance	564	5,34	1,55	1	7
Innovation of the performance	566	5,38	1,64	1	7
Generate Reflection in spectator	568	5,70	1,53	1	7
Ability to feel flamenco	566	6,45	1,19	1	7
Make others feel flamenco	562	6,52	1,13	1	7
Theatre	576	2,56	1,65	1	7
Record Sales	577	2,59	1,72	1	7
Ticket Sales	577	2,72	1,79	1	7

Own sources

Descriptive statistics reported in Table no. 1 show that the participants were women (46%) as well as men (54%) balanced for all the age ranges with a high educational level. They were also familiar with flamenco, as their knowledge, possession and time consuming flamenco music prove. Furthermore, the participants valued aspects of flamenco performer.

With this useful information that reduces uncertainty about the aspects of a flamenco performer, the study identifies the aspects that influence its perceived value and presents the correlations between them. This approximation helped the election of the methodology used to know the subjacent structure of the data: exploratory factor analysis by principal components (Malthouse and Calder, 2002; Lundy and Smith, 2017; Hernando and Campo, 2017a). An exploratory factor analysis is useful when there are high correlations between

the variables. Since this is indicative of redundant information and, therefore, few factors will explain much of the total variability. This allowed the creation of a synthetic index for the valuation of the performer.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Correlations analysis

The correlation analysis shows the connection between variables, these correlations are statistically significant at 99%, see [Table no. 2](#). The highest correlations are between ‘ticket sales’ and ‘record sales’ (0.9061), ‘make others feel flamenco’ and ‘ability to feel flamenco’ (0.8982) and finally, ‘record sales’ and ‘theatre’ (0.7389).

Consumers distinguish the relation between ‘ticket sales’ and ‘record sales’ and ‘record sales’ and ‘theatre’, since these variables are part of their consuming behaviour and therefore, their perception of the performers’ value. Furthermore, the feelings play an important role in their perceptions according to the correlations between ‘make others feel flamenco’ and ‘ability to feel flamenco’ ([Heredia-Carroza et al., 2018](#)).

The following correlations greater than 0.6 are between ‘ticket sales’-‘theatre’ (0.6879), and ‘improvisation’-‘distinctive element’ (0.6007). The latter shows a conception for the consumers about the necessity to have a distinctive element to improvise during the performance.

Moreover, the correlations greater than 0.5 explain some music aspects of the performance. Particularly, the correlations between ‘distinctive element’ and ‘make other feel flamenco’, demonstrate the importance of the distinctive way of performing to transmit feelings to the audience. This does not mean that the other elements are not important, since without its cooperative contribution the perception of the feelings would be incomplete. This indicates that consumers highlight the importance of the performers’ personal way to externalise the work in its valuation ([Heredia-Carroza et al., 2019a](#)).

The correlations between artistic variables such as: ‘technique’, ‘improvisation’ and ‘musical repertoire’ show the requirement to have a trained technique in flamenco to perform certain works and to improvise. This statement is contrary to the extended belief that flamenco performers don’t need a demanding training of the.

These correlations reveal how consumers visualise the three different categories of variables stated before: artistic, feelings and consumers’ behaviour. In order to offer empiric evidence, an exploratory factor analysis was done by principal components to know the subagent structure of the data ([Hernando, 2015](#)).

4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the whole sample, due to the “do not know, non response” option, data sets are not complete, therefore the number of observations is 530 consumers. The 12 variables specified earlier underwent a factor analysis using maximum likelihood estimation with varimax rotation, that is, the resulting factors were allowed to correlate. Accuracy of the model fit was tested through: Bartlett’s sphericity test (sig. 0.000) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (0.844).

Table no. 2 – Correlations among variables valued

	Distinctive element	Technique	Improvisation	Musical Repertoire	Consistency of the performance	Innovation of the performance	Generate Reflection in spectator	Ability to feel flamenco	Make others feel flamenco	Theatre	Record sales	Ticket sales	
	Distinctive element	1											
	Technique	0.5732*	1										
	Improvisation	0.6007*	0.5660*	1									
	Musical Repertoire	0.4503*	0.5514*	0.4952*	1								
	Consistency of the performance	0.4756*	0.4938*	0.4951*	0.5747*	1							
	Innovation of the performance	0.5239*	0.5062*	0.5829*	0.4617*	0.5680*	1						
	Generate reflection in spectator	0.416*	0.3388*	0.4527*	0.3064*	0.3726*	0.3644*	1					
	Ability to feel flamenco	0.5399*	0.4146*	0.5086*	0.3418*	0.3945*	0.3698*	0.5931*	1				
	Make others feel flamenco	0.5623*	0.4598*	0.5576*	0.3706*	0.3788*	0.3780*	0.5860*	0.8982*	1			
	Theatre	0.1146*	0.2106*	0.0521*	0.2264*	0.1666*	0.1837*	0.1042*	0.0171*	0.0093*	1		
	Record sales	0.0671*	0.1724*	0.0541*	0.1779*	0.1416*	0.1665*	0.0719*	0.0095*	-0.0187*	0.7389*	1	
	Ticket sales	0.0753*	0.1773*	0.0602*	0.1886*	0.1603*	0.1749*	0.0714*	0.0229*	-0.0042*	0.6897*	0.9061*	1

* 99% Significance level

Table no. 3 shows the results of the factor analysis for consumers. It identifies three factors that summarise the elements that affect the perceived value of the flamenco performer explaining more than 72% of the total accumulated variance (Srakar *et al.*, 2017). Factors are clearly differentiated and emerge from the features of performers stated by the interviewed experts.

Table no. 3 – Results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis for experts

Factors	Loading	Eigenvalue	Percentage of Variance explained (%)
<i>Virtuosity</i>		5,04985	42,08
Distinctive element	0,6052		
Technique	0,7161		
Improvisation	0,641		
Musical repertoire	0,7496		
Consistency of the performance	0,7582		
Innovation of the performance	0,7297		
<i>Feelings</i>		2,52081	21,01
Generate Reflection in spectator	0,7433		
Ability to feel flamenco	0,9103		
Make others feel flamenco	0,9078		
<i>Influencer-Brand</i>		1,09359	9,11
Theatre	0,8583		
Record Sales	0,9538		
Ticket Sales	0,9365		
Total			72,2
			$\chi^2=4122,156$
Barlett's sphericity test			df. 66
			Sig. 0,000
KMO			0,844

Own Sources

The factors will be identified as three distinguishable elements of the perceived value of flamenco performer: virtuosity, feelings and influencer-brand (Radbourne *et al.*, 2009; Chan and Au, 2016). Taking up the multi-dimensionality of the cultural value (Klamer, 2003), virtuosity factor is integrated by aspects linked to its aesthetic dimension (Lazzaro, 2006; Shanahan, 1978) such as: distinctive element, technique, improvisation, musical repertoire, consistency and innovation of the performance.

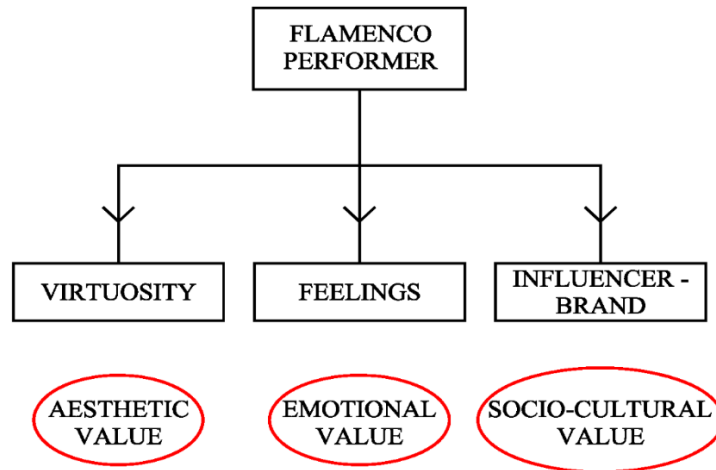
The feelings factor is composed by distinguishable elements that emerge of the performer's talent and are linked to the subjective element of the flamenco work. This factor is strongly related to the emotional dimension (Lee *et al.*, 2011; Perez-Alvaro and Manders, 2016).

The variables that comprise these two factors, virtuosity and feelings, were identified by the interviewed experts as distinctive aspects of the performer. These aspects make up the differentiating talent of the performer which makes it unique and irreplaceable for the audience (Heredia-Carroza *et al.*, 2017)

The influencer-brand factor is composed of variables linked to the consumers' behavior: the theatre where the performance takes place and the sales of tickets and records.

They may be associated with the socio-cultural dimension (Karababa and Kjeldgaard, 2014; Galvagno and Dalli, 2014; Hernando and Campo, 2017a). Ultimately, the perceived value of the performer's brand comes from the prestige of the theatre, festival or record company where they present their work. Figure no. 1 illustrates the relation between the factors and the different cultural dimensions.

Figure no. 1 – Distinguishable elements of the valuation of flamenco performers



Own elaboration

Finally, since virtuosity factor accounts for more than 42% of the accumulated variance, it may be used in the creation process of a synthetic index reflecting key aspects that influence the valuation of flamenco performer (Pantti, 2010), as Table no. 4 shows.

Table no. 4 – Index to measure the perceived value of the flamenco performer

Flamenco Performer valuation Index	Loading
Distinctive element	0,6052
Technique	0,7161
Improvisation	0,641
Musical repertoire	0,7496
Consistency of the performance	0,7582
Innovation of the performance	0,7297

Own Source

This index is generally applicable and reasonably organised to measure perceived value of the flamenco performer. Not only does it provide a rather comprehensive conceptualisation of the consumer perceptions but also its aspects are consistent with respect to the requirements stated before for the interviewed experts (Au *et al.*, 2016).

5. CONCLUSIONS

This article contributes to empiric literature on valuation of music. Concretely, it identifies the most important elements which influence the perceived value of flamenco performers: virtuosity, feelings and influencer-brand. From the scope of cultural economics, the concept of cultural value was used to explain the multidimensionality of the factors.

The methodology combined qualitative and quantitative instruments: interviews to experts and surveys to consumers, respectively. The first one, helped identify the aspects that make up the perceived value of the performer. The second one, allowed consumers' to value given aspects. That valuation later enabled a correlation analysis that lead to an exploratory factor analysis by principal components to learn the subjacent structure of the data. All of which resulted in three factors that include the different aspects that influence the perceived value of flamenco performer. Being virtuosity the one that provides more explanation of the accumulated variance (more than 42%).

The above mentioned process also allowed the creation of a synthetic index for the valuation of the performer. The index is based on the aspects in the virtuosity factor, and is identified with the aesthetic dimension of the cultural value. This index shows how virtuosity is a fundamental factor that influences the perceived value of the performer, as observed in consumer valuation.

Finally, the index has a greater importance as it provides recording companies, an instrument that reduces uncertainty about the characteristics of the performer and that can also be used as a decision making instrument for future signings of performers in record companies based on the consumers' perceptions. This methodology could be replicated for the study of other musical genres.

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ANNEX 1**Panel of interviewed experts**

PERFORMER AND COMPOSERS	José Mercé	Award Masters of Mediterranean Music of the Mediterranean Music Institute (MMI) of Berkley College of Music. 2010 Medalla de Andalucía. One double platinum record, two platinum records, and two golden records
	Tomatito	2016 Gold Medal to Merit in Fine Arts. Winner of 6 Latin Grammy
	Marina Heredia	2016 Giraldillo for Cante. 2010 Best Cante Flanco CD Award by Crítica Nacional de Flamenco
	Paco Cepero	2003 Gold Medal to Merit in Fine Arts
	Dr. Rocío Márquez	2008 Winner of the Lámpara Minera and 2016 Giraldillo for Innovation
	Barullo	Winner of the 2016 Concurso Nacional de Córdoba dance category
POLITICIANS AND RESEARCHERS	Dr. Juan Manuel Suárez Japón	1990-1994 Culture and Environment Counsellor of the Junta de Andalucía. Professor of Human Geography at the Universidad Pablo de Olavide
REPRESENTATIVES SGAE	Javier Losada Calvo	Vice-president of Pequeño Derecho of SGAE. 1999-2012 Member of the Administration Council of the AIE
	José Manuel Gamboa	Spanish journalist, writer, and musical producer specialized in flamenco. Currently, technical music analyst in the Flamenco specialty and member of the academic group of the Lecture of Flamencology at Jerez de la Frontera.
REPRESENTATIVES AIE	Álvaro Hernández-Pinzón	Director of Legal Consultancy and Collection Strategy
	Pedro Rivas Prieto	Attorney of AIE
CULTURAL MANAGERS	Cristóbal Ortega Martos	Artistic Director of la Bienal de flamenco de Sevilla (2014 and 2016)
	Isamay Benavente Ferrera	Artistic director of the Festival de Jerez de la Frontera
	Manuel Herrera Rodas	Artistic Director of the Jueves Flamencos organised by the Fundación Cajasol and member of the Advising Council of la Bienal flamenco de Sevilla. (1997-2006) Artistic Director of la Bienal de flamenco de Sevilla
CENTRO ANDALUZ DE DOCUMENTACIÓN DEL FLAMENCO	Dr. Ana María Tenorio Notario	Manager of the CADF Documentation Department

ANNEX 2

Questions asked to the personalities of flamenco interviewed

1. In your opinion, what are the main creative contributions to the flamenco musical work? Of the aforementioned contributions, what do the performer provides?
2. In your opinion, what elements reflect the originality/creativity of the performer's contribution to the flamenco musical work?
3. How can this contribution be measured?
4. Explain your methodology of work. Specifically: how do you participate in the creation process? Describe your performance.
5. What role does intuition and improvisation play in flamenco?

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