

# 7.1 From product usage data to a description of the readers in lifestyle terms

## INTRODUCTION

The Belgian National Readership Survey (financed by the Centre for Information on the Media – CIM – a non-profitmaking organisation of media, advertising agencies and the most important advertisers), has been carried out by SOBEMAP since 1965 and has now become permanent, with annual publication.

The latest version, which became available in September 1980, covers 170 media, including press, radio, television and cinema.

Since 1972, the readers have been described not only in all the usual socio-demographic terms, but also with regard to their purchase/consumption/usage/ownership of some 500 products, durables or services, combined in about 150 sectors. We also register, for most of these product sectors, the brand(s) bought most often and the frequency/volume of purchase or consumption, in order to retain the possibility of identifying and analysing heavy users.

The introduction of the product-usage data has obviously been perceived on our market as a very big improvement. Most marketing and advertising executives were indeed aware of and concerned with the necessity of a more and more segmented approach, and the difficulty of finding efficient classification criteria, correlating actually with the likelihood of a positive response to well-determined concepts and products.

During the last eight years a bridge has been established between the concerns and wishes of marketing managers and those of media planners; both can make practical use of the recognised existence of attitudes and interest centres underlying and explaining together the adoption of a product and the attachment to

specific media.

It is not our intention, however, to give a full description of all the ways product usage data are used by advertisers for defining their target groups and choosing the media to reach them; or by publishers for showing how efficient their media are for reaching the current or potential consumers of specific products. We intend to show, with a few concrete examples, how these product-data are also currently used for developing attitude scales or lifestyle information.

### EXAMPLE 1: SPECIFIC ATTITUDE SCALES

As early as 1969 we developed, with a financial contribution from *Reader's Digest*, attitude scales based on consumption patterns.

Since Guttman's and Thurstone's work, the methodology of such applications is well-known: the purpose is of course to build reliable classification criteria by taking into account in combination the answers to various attitudinal questions.

But we applied it here to behavioural items. And the sequence of analyses became: analysing the statistical relationships (in terms of association or mutual implication more than in terms of correlation) between very numerous product or brand purchases and consumption; selecting the behavioural items which are obviously related to the same underlying attitude; retaining a few of them (10 to 12) – more or less discriminant – for defining a scale along which each individual will be positioned in respect of the number of behavioural items (among the ones selected) which are characteristic of his purchase and consumption habits;

**TABLE 1**  
**Attitude scale based on product usage data**

<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Housewives</i>
1. Health concerns	1. Health concerns	1. Health concerns
2. Interest for innovative products	2. Interest for innovative products	2. Interest for innovative products
3. Propensity to spend	3. Propensity to spend	3. Interest for convenience – time saving
4. Openmindedness	4. Openmindedness	4. Interest for cooking
	5. Personal care	5. Homely Women
		6. Propensity to spend

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and ascribing (only for convenience in communication) to the resulting scale the name of an attitude, a thinking process, a way of reacting which seems to cover and summarise the characteristics and psychological implications common to the few behavioural items selected.

The first scales we obtained were identified as being related to the propensity to spend money (obviously more important, in many cases, than income) and the acceptance of rather new and innovative concepts and products.

In 1972, several more attitude scales (see list in

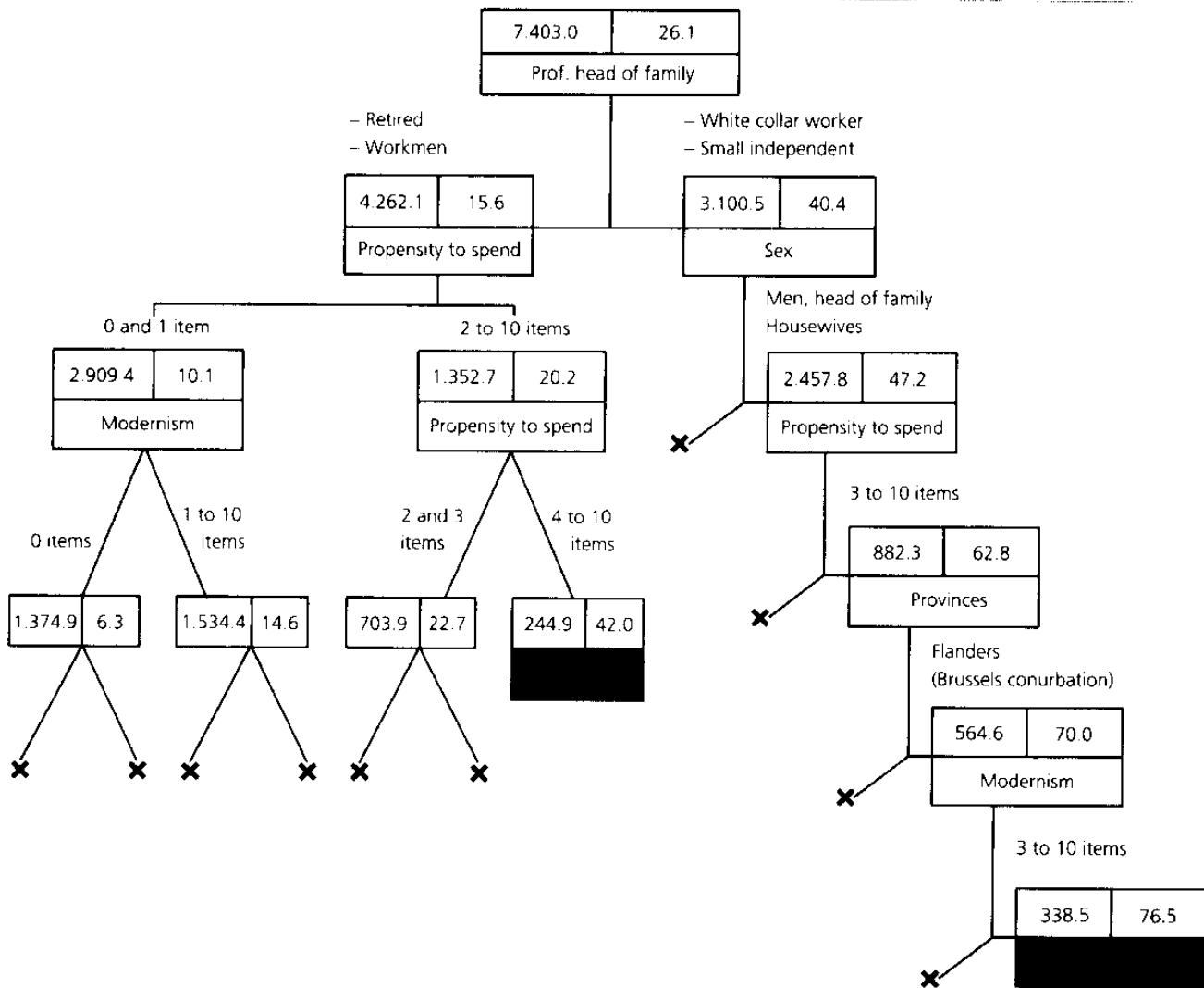
**Table 1**) were developed.

And they were used with much success in the definition or selection of target groups for all kinds of products. More concretely, when applying multiple regression or AID (discriminant analysis) techniques for isolating and describing the potential users/consumers of products or services, these attitude scales were selected by the computer at the outset as the most efficient predictive or explanatory variables.

**Figure 1** shows an AID example (dating from 1972) concerning the use of a bank account.

Even at that time (well before the development of the

**FIGURE 1**  
**Current bank account**



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main lifestyle systems), it became clear that such classification criteria were in much closer relationship with the behaviour towards specific products (or, the probability of positive reaction to specific concepts) than the usual socio-demographics.

### EXAMPLE 2: A TYPOLOGY (SEGMENTATION) OF BELGIAN CONSUMERS

#### Objectives and methodology of this application

In cooperation with McCann Erickson Belgium, we decided to cluster or regroup all the Belgian consumers as a function of their consumption/purchase patterns.

The rationale behind any cluster analysis is well-known; the purpose is always to group people who show similar (or parallel) profiles, thus obtaining a limited number of customer types, each as homogeneous as possible, and as different from each other as possible, in order to get the opportunity to look at and operate on a limited number of specific, well-defined groups.

In this specific case, the active variables, used for defining the individual profiles, were again behavioural items: purchase, consumption, heavy consumption of products and use of services. Starting with a total sample of 10,000 individuals, representative of the total universe of Belgian adults (defined as 15 years and older) we finally isolated nine homogeneous clusters corresponding to various typical consumption patterns.

#### Brief summary of the results

The nine typical consumption patterns were described as follows:

	%
(1) Consumption maniacs	9.6
(2) Yes but only what is strictly needed	18.0
(3) Left aside	16.5
(4) Good family fathers	9.8
(5) Champions of convenience - Easy takers	12.4
(6) Homo vacanciens	12.9
(7) As long as one is healthy	7.7
(8) Liquid intellectual	6.0
(9) Up-to-date young couples (in)	7.1
(7,660,200 persons)	100.0

The definition and the respective sizes of these groups are obviously the direct result of our Belgian socio-cultural and economic environment at a definite point in time (in this case, 1977). Consequently, it would not seem very interesting or useful to describe them all in full detail.

We will simply try, in order to illustrate our reasoning with concrete examples, to give some insight on the composition and meaning of some of the clusters.

#### Cluster No 1: Consumption maniacs (9.6% of the universe)

Their profile could be summarised, in broad terms, as follows. They are heavy users of all drinks and food products; most of the electrical household appliances; deodorants, bath foam; cars (two and more); holidays abroad, in foreign countries; hi-fi, records, slides, tapes; restaurant and friends at home; financial services, including insurances, credit card, bank cards; are readers of business periodicals, motoring magazines; and go quite often to the cinema.

It was therefore quite clear that these individuals were eating, drinking, and purchasing a lot of products and in most of the cases rather large quantities of them. For them, money meant happiness, once they had spent it. Their savings might as well be considered as 'important purchases somewhat delayed'. Their social life was very active, meeting and hosting friends. They were only to be found – for obvious reasons – in the upper and higher middle socio-economical classes, but they represented only a small part of these social strata.

#### Cluster No 2: Yes but only what is strictly needed (18.0%)

They showed the following consumption patterns: they were consumers/users of butane, propane gas; washing machines; deep freezers; very light beer; but not consumers/users of: convenience products; slimming products; bath foam, paper handkerchiefs; holidays; hi-fi, records; credit cards or bank cards, and they read the interest-defending press; and free periodicals (door-to-door).

Such people do not suffer lack of money. But they reject any type of luxury item, and central heating or the use of electricity for cooking mean luxury to them. They have a deep freezer but are not prepared to fill it with ready-made deep frozen products. And even the washing machine is perceived as a healthy investment, a source of savings.

#### The use of the results – practical applications

The members of each of these clusters were, of course, described in all the more classical socio-demographical terms. This showed clearly that, with the obvious exception of some rather extreme clusters, the consumption patterns were not very much related to, and certainly not determined by, socio-economical status or income level. This classification of Belgian consumers provided, consequently, another useful type-criterion for segmentation and targeting.

Between 1977 and 1979, this 'typology' (described in more creative terms and illustrated by McCann Erickson) was used in more than 100 cases for segmentations (applications of an AID type programme),

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*ad hoc* cluster analyses, media planning, positioning of media and their readers, and so on.

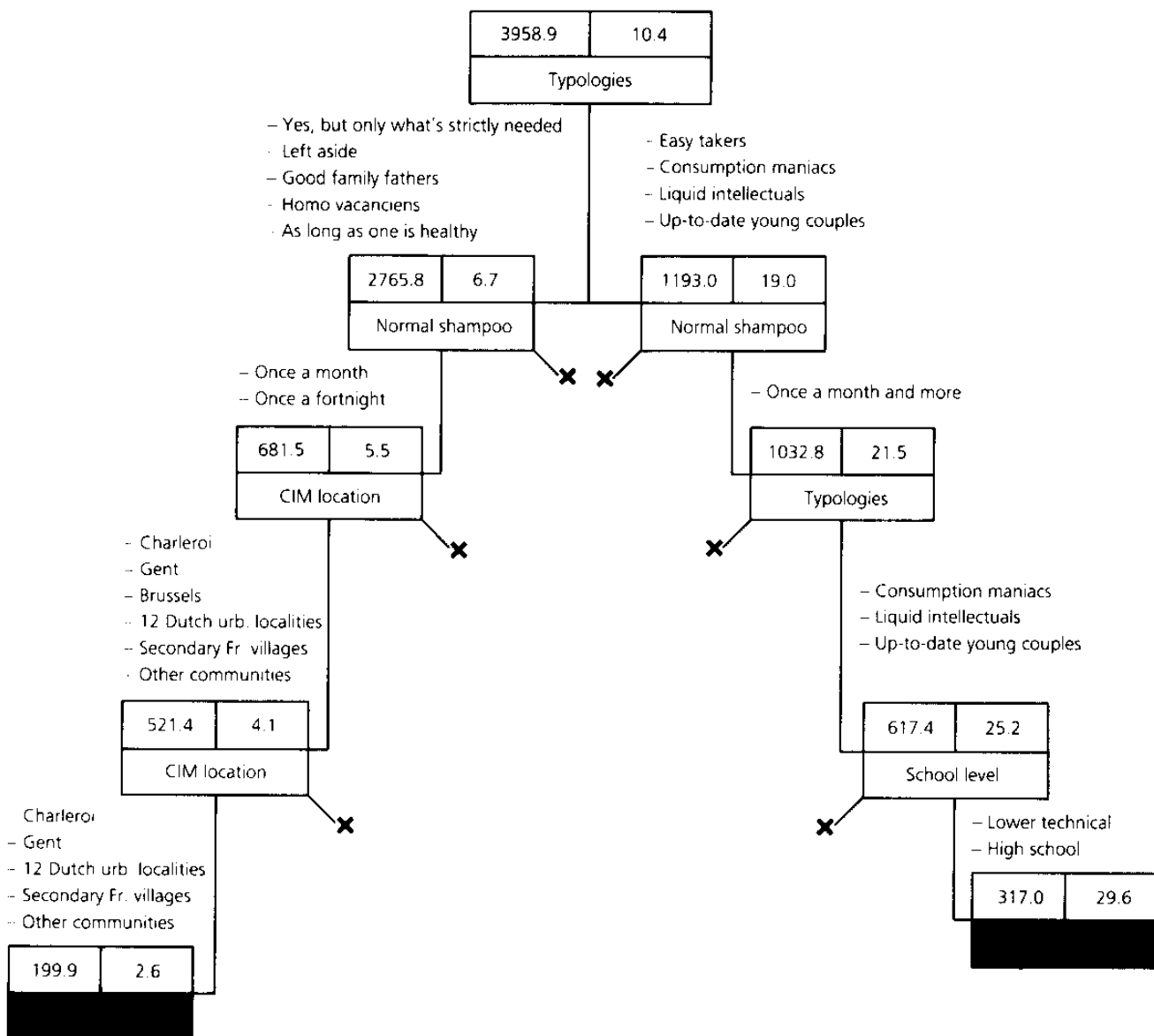
It proved to be a very powerful tool. For example, it was about the single breakdown criterion discriminating between the smokers of the different Belgian brands of cigarettes, and contributed largely to the development of specific advertising concepts for one of them; and this classification was selected by the computer as the single

or one of the few best predictors in 90% of the segmentations (see the example, concerning the potential use of After shampoo, in **Figure 2**).

Consequently, the same analyses have been carried out on the output file of the 1980 CIM Media Products Survey.

The results of this new cluster analysis will be published very shortly. They are also very valuable for

**FIGURE 2**  
**After shampoo**



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coming to a better understanding of the overall socio-cultural evolution of our country. They illustrate, sometimes in a quite dramatic way, the effects of economic trends on the 'changing consumer'.

### EXAMPLE 3: POSITIONING VARIOUS DAILY NEWSPAPERS

#### Main objectives of this application

The management of one of the most important Belgian groups of newspapers wanted to provide to its sales team objective material making it possible not only to demonstrate, in the classical way, the opportunities offered by its dailies (in terms of cost-efficiency) for reaching current and potential consumers of the various products, services, durables covered in the CIM study, but also to provide evidence, via a more attitudinal or lifestyle approach, of the interest the readers of these same dailies were likely to feel and show for products currently not studied by the CIM or for specific concepts and claims.

In order to answer these needs, we carried out a set of processes showing the specific and respective characteristics of the readers of all the larger Flemish language daily newspapers.

And we finally came out with a very concrete positioning of the various media in a space of coordinates illustrating the basic attitudes of their respective readers and their lifestyles: spending habits, purchasing power, interest for rather innovative products, sophistication in leisure activities, interest for fashionable items, more or less active social life, status seeking, and so on.

#### Methodology

In this specific case, the sequence of processes included: (a) selecting some 60 product-related behavioural items, such as: fairly frequent purchase of numerous food products; use of personal care products; leisure activities and the holiday habits; recourse to specific financial services; and level of equipment and comfort of the home.

The products and services concerned were selected on the base of their likely discriminative character (because still rather engaging, somewhat new, with quite a low incidence of market share), without taking into account in any way their actual relationships with the fact of reading some defined newspapers, or none of them.

The purpose was indeed to provide the market with a broad and objective description of the existing behavioural patterns and the underlying attitudinal dimensions (at least as regards the Flemish speaking part of our national market).

(b) carrying out a principal components (factorial) analysis in these 60 behavioural items, combined with

about 20 more classical socio-demographical variables.

This analysis leads to the isolation of 12 (more or less important) main underlying attitudinal dimensions, which we interpreted and defined in behavioural and, whenever possible, in psychological terms, on the base of their correlations with the initial variables.

(c) analysing the relationship between these attitudinal dimensions and the reading habits, the fact of reading this or that specific media, on the one hand, with cross-tables, and on the other, by using correspondence analysis (mapping). The resulting graphs show the main attitudinal patterns (ie combinations of attitudinal dimensions) which discriminate between the readerships of the various dailies, and the relative positionings of these dailies, this time according to the respective attitudinal characteristics of their current readers.

They make it possible to analyse the actual degree of competition between the media, to determine objectively the extent to which they attract (or even are all fighting to attract) the same types of readers. Our experience has shown that such data can also be used for isolating possible gaps in the market and contributing somewhat to the editorial policy (of course with help of explanatory and diagnostic research, at later stages).

#### The attitudinal dimensions or factors

As already mentioned, we isolated 12 behavioural patterns.

The reader will find in **Table 2** an exhaustive list of these attitudinal factors.

The way we finally ascribed a definition and a name to each of them, with as much objectivity as possible, can be illustrated with a few examples:

(1) the people who scored high on Factor 1 had the following common characteristics:

(a) belonging very frequently to the higher and high middle socio-economic classes.

(b) a lot of expenditure tending to show a rather active social life or at least to illustrate the fact of paying some attention to their social image, at least in a Belgian socio-cultural environment (barbecue, two cars and one of them with a large engine, telephone at their private home, consumption of champagne and several types of aperitives).

(c) somewhat concerned with their appearance and clothing, which might be perceived as a confirmation of the above.

(d) an obvious interest in and an easy acceptance of various durables and services which are still viewed as new or even as innovative (barbecue, dishwasher, medical toothpaste, credit or bank cards).

(e) some tendency to pay attention to fashion and to select fashionable items.

Trying to express in a short and rather straight-

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**TABLE 2**  
**Positioning daily newspapers**

**Trying to summarise the content of the factors (behavioural patterns) we obtained**

Factor 1	Extrovert big spenders – socially concerned and socially active.
Factor 2	Heads of family with professional activity and feelings of responsibility.
Factor 3	Interest for convenience food products.
Factor 4	Small owners living in the country.
Factor 5	Women much concerned with their outlook (personal care).
Factor 6	Social drinkers – partners for drinking.
Factor 7	Dietetic and figure (slimness) – concerns.
Factor 8	Introvert – conservatism – no interest for fashion items.
Factor 9	Well equipped and established households.
Factor 10	Do-it-yourselfers active hobbies.
Factor 11	Lower middle class.
Factor 12	Discoverers – spend holidays abroad.

forward way all the psychological implications of such a behavioural pattern, we finally called them *Extrovert big spenders – socially concerned and socially active*.

(2) at the positive end of Factor 2, we grouped men who could be briefly described as follows:

- (a) all professionally active and between 35 and 54 years old.
- (b) most of them having at least two dependants.
- (c) presenting themselves as the main responsible person, in the household, for decisions related to insurances and other credit/saving financial services.
- (d) having already taken out life insurance.
- (e) holders of a bank or credit card.
- (f) being the main driver of a car and driving with it per year about 1.5 times more miles than the average.

To cover all these aspects, we chose: *Heads of family with professional activity and feelings of responsibility*.

(3) Factor 3 was particularly easy to identify. It brings together, indeed, all the behavioural items related to the adoption of these numerous products which are brought on to the market in order to reduce effort, facilitate tasks, increase comfort.

It became *Interest for convenience products*.

(4) Factor 4 was in narrow correlation with some of the socio-demographic criteria: living in very small communities or in country areas, below average income and nevertheless owning its current home, enjoying a garden of not insignificant size.

An obvious heading was: *Small owners living in the country*.

(5) Factor 5 was typical of the women who are heavy users of cosmetics, deodorants, analgesics, tranquillisers. Without trying to make a psychoanalytical interpretation of such a pattern, we used the heading: *Women much concerned with their outlook (personal care)*.

(6) no such hesitation was possible as regards the psychological content of our Factor 6. This was indeed in very strong correlation with a quite heavy consumption (both at home and out of home, in social environments) of all types of alcoholic drinks (top fermented beer, luxury beer, all aperitives, whisky, champagne), people showing such typical habits of 'social drinkers' were called *Social drinkers – partners for drinking*.

(7) Factor 7 was obviously related to *Dietetic concerns*. It correlated indeed negatively with the consumption of all types of fattening food products.

(8) the interpretation of Factor 8 was slightly less obvious. This dimension isolated individuals with a low (or even very low) education level, never less than 35 years and often over 55 years old, never wearing jeans, never drink cola or adult soft drinks, not owners of a hi-fi equipment, rejecting most of the food products which are not strictly necessary and most modern electrical household appliances, and obviously not prepared to buy a product because it is fashionable. The underlying attitude – we felt – might be called *Introvert – conservatism – no interest for fashion items*.

(9) at one extreme of Factor 9, we found individuals between 35 and 54 years old, owners (or about to become owners) of their home, belonging to the higher and high middle socio-economical classes, socially not very active, paying evidently much more attention to the comfort and equipment of their home than to their social image, their prestige. They could obviously spend much money but had chosen to do it for the comfort and satisfaction of their family, at home. Briefly: *Well equipped and established households*.

(10) Factor 10 was mainly generated by hobby activities at home (including painting, carpentry, gardening, etc) and frequent purchases by mail-order: both probably in order to make good bargains and to save money. The name *Do-it-yourselfers – active hobbies* does not ideally cover all the psychological implications of such behaviour.

(11) the people who score high on Factor 11 were not at all typical in terms of purchase or consumption habits. They seemed to represent the largest part of our lower middle socio-economic class, or at least that part of it which does not deviate from the average, most usual consumption pattern. We were left, logically, with only one possible heading: *Lower middle socio-economic classes*.

(12) finally, Factor 12 isolated the Belgians who spend holidays or vacation abroad, in a foreign country, at least once a year. As a consequence, this factor was also in

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close correlation with the frequency of air travel and the fact of using international check cards or international assistance services, as well with the ownership of a film camera, and the actual use of a barbecue at home: *Spend holidays abroad – discoverers*.

Readers will certainly have noticed that this application is methodologically speaking very different from the typological approach we described as Example 2. In the present case, scores on all these attitudinal factors are ascribed to each individual. In reality, it is indeed quite clear that several of these attitudinal dimensions can be conjointly typical of a well-defined consumer, but only some of them will be actualised, converted into action to any large extent.

### Positioning various daily newspapers

A comparison of the mean scores obtained on the various attitudinal dimensions by the readers of the various dailies was already sufficient for demonstrating obvious relationships between these lifestyle data and the likelihood of reading *De Standaard*, *Het Laatste Nieuws*, *De Morgen*, *Gazet van Antwerpen* or other Belgian newspapers.

Looking at **Tables 3** and **4**, one will for example notice that the readers of the newspaper symbolised with a letter G (in fact: *De Standaard*) tended to score very highly on the scales of extrovert big spenders (socially active) – Factor 1; social drinkers (social drinkers) – Factor 6; well equipped and established households (comfort at home) – Factor 9; spend holidays abroad – discoverers (holidays abroad) – Factor 12; heads of family with activities and feelings of responsibilities – Factor 2. Very low on the scales of ... introvert, conservatism, no interest for fashionable items – Factor 8; small owners living in the country – Factor 4; lower middle socio-economic classes – Factor 11.

**TABLE 3**  
Positioning daily newspapers (relationship between media and attitudinal factors)

Readers of the dailies	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
A	-0.17	0.13	-0.08	0.30	-0.13	0.24
B	0.09	0.43	0.37	0.54	-0.29	-0.30
C	0.11	0.29	0.04	0.02	-0.16	0.35
D	0.37	0.30	0.46	-0.35	-0.10	0.13
E	0.29	0.33	0.23	-0.75	0.01	0.74
F	0.99	0.45	0.36	-0.74	0.31	0.98
G	<u>1.37</u>	<u>0.89</u>	0.52	-0.44	-0.13	<u>1.41</u>
H	0.07	0.27	-0.02	0.33	-0.06	0.31
I	0.38	0.45	<u>0.66</u>	-1.64	-0.14	0.54

**TABLE 4**  
Positioning daily newspapers (relationship between media and attitudinal factors)

Readers of the dailies	Factor 7	Factor 8	Factor 9	Factor 10	Factor 11	Factor 12
A	-0.07	-0.08	0.03	0.36	0.19	-0.24
B	-0.01	-0.17	0.75	0.38	0.08	-0.28
C	-0.05	-0.01	-0.20	0.25	0.10	0.06
D	0.07	-0.34	0.44	0.03	-0.14	0.53
E	-0.39	0.03	-0.37	0.66	-0.15	0.44
F	-0.20	-0.78	0.34	<u>0.77</u>	-0.86	1.16
G	-0.05	-1.04	<u>1.13</u>	0.52	-1.12	<u>1.48</u>
H	0.11	-0.38	0.42	0.16	0.02	0.09
I	<u>0.19</u>	-0.20	-0.32	0.12	-0.25	1.03

In other words, people who showed the behavioural patterns summarised by Factors 1, 2, 6, 9, 12 were very likely to read *De Standaard*, either because these specific attitudes lead to the choice of this newspaper or because some specific underlying psychological characteristics explain both such typical behaviour and the interest (or, likelihood of an interest) in the editorial content of *De Standaard*.

The readership of some other newspapers, such as the one we will call, for obvious ethical reasons, C, was much less characterised by the various attitudinal dimensions. Such media do not particularly attract people who show and actualise some of the attitudes we isolated.

In order to take into account the full complexity of this reality, the interactions or inter-relations between the various attitudinal dimensions, we used a correspondence analysis technique for reducing the number of attitudinal factors and, consequently, the dimensionality of the space, and for representing graphically the relative characteristics (ie, combinations of attitudes) of the 'average reader' of each of the newspapers.

The main underlying combinations of attitudes, which generated the set of coordinates in which readers would be positioned, can be described as follows (see **Table 5**).

(a) Axis 1, explaining to begin with 63% of the total variance and obviously opposing the most usual behavioural patterns of members of the lower middle classes and small country-owners to attitudes expressing openmindedness, an active social life, an interest for innovative products and fashionable items (all aspects duly covered by the factors we called: Extrovert big spenders; Social drinkers; Holidays abroad).

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**TABLE 5**  
Positioning daily newspapers (correspondence analysis – definitions of the main three axes)

	Axis 1	Axis 2	Axis 3	Sum 3 axes
Parts of variance explained/total	.634	.249	.076	.959
Factor 1 Extrovert big spenders – socially concerned and active	.870	.105	.001	.976
Factor 2 Heads of family, active and responsible	.430	.017	.129	.575
Factor 3 Interest for convenience food pdt's	.226	.179	.474	.880
Factor 4 Small owners living in the country	.748	.235	.014	.997
Factor 5 Women much concerned with outlook personal care	.017	.191	.266	.474
Factor 6 Social drinkers	.677	.000	.238	.915
Factor 7 Dietetic and line-concerns	.157	.098	.487	.747
Factor 8 Conservatism – no interest for fashion	.476	.504	.002	.982
Factor 9 Well established households	.001	.862	.122	.984
Factor 10 Do-it-yourselfers active hobbies	.006	.014	.648	.668
Factor 11 Lower middle class	.763	.225	.007	.995
Factor 12 Spend holidays abroad	.975	.006	.006	.988

(b) Axis 2, accounting for 25% of the total variance and mostly related to, on the one hand, a very low interest in modern products and solutions, usually going together with a low education level, and on the other hand, the attitudes we had considered as typical of well-equipped and established households, much more concerned with comfort in the home than with social activities.

(c) Axis 3, accounting for only 8% and therefore quite negligible but quite evidently opposing people who have active hobbies at home and try to save money in many ways to those individuals who most easily adopt convenience products and personal care products.

In the present paper – dedicated only to the technical aspects of these applications – we will concentrate our attention on axes 1 and 2. The analysis in **Figure 3** leads then, for example, to the following conclusions.

(a) the readers of newspaper G (*De Standaard*) are positioned (and this on the objective base of their behaviour, their consumption and purchase habits, their leisure activities) very high on Axis 1 (accounting here for 66% of their specific variance) and Axis 2 (explaining 32%). We can consequently say that they are characterised by . . . an active social life, spending well above average, a high probability of reacting positively to new and quite sophisticated (maybe elitist) products and services, while being obviously concerned with the comfort and level of equipment of their home.

(b) the readers of newspaper B look much less socially active, show much less interest for fashionable items, do not pay much attention to their social image. Many of

them are located in small communities or country areas. But the position of this readership on Axis 2 tends to demonstrate that these people are also quite concerned with the comfort of their home and do not refuse modern equipment or appliances.

When looking at such results, it is also important to keep in mind the geographical distribution of the readers; indeed, only a very few of these newspapers cover all our Flemish speaking areas at all uniformly, and other such experiments showed us that one would also obtain rather different positionings, in those attitudinal terms, for the inhabitants of our various 'provinces'.

Nevertheless, the differences in composition of the readerships of the various newspapers are important in very operational terms even if partly explained by regional discrepancies.

### The use of the results

The results of this positioning analysis – obviously a great help for understanding the specific attitudinal characteristics of the readers of the various media concerned – have been used in day-to-day commercial contacts for promoting some of the dailies involved, no longer in respect of the products and services the readers currently use or buy, but in more general terms of attitudes, which in many cases provides interesting information for the advertiser and its agency even when the product/service to be advertised was not studied in the media-product survey.

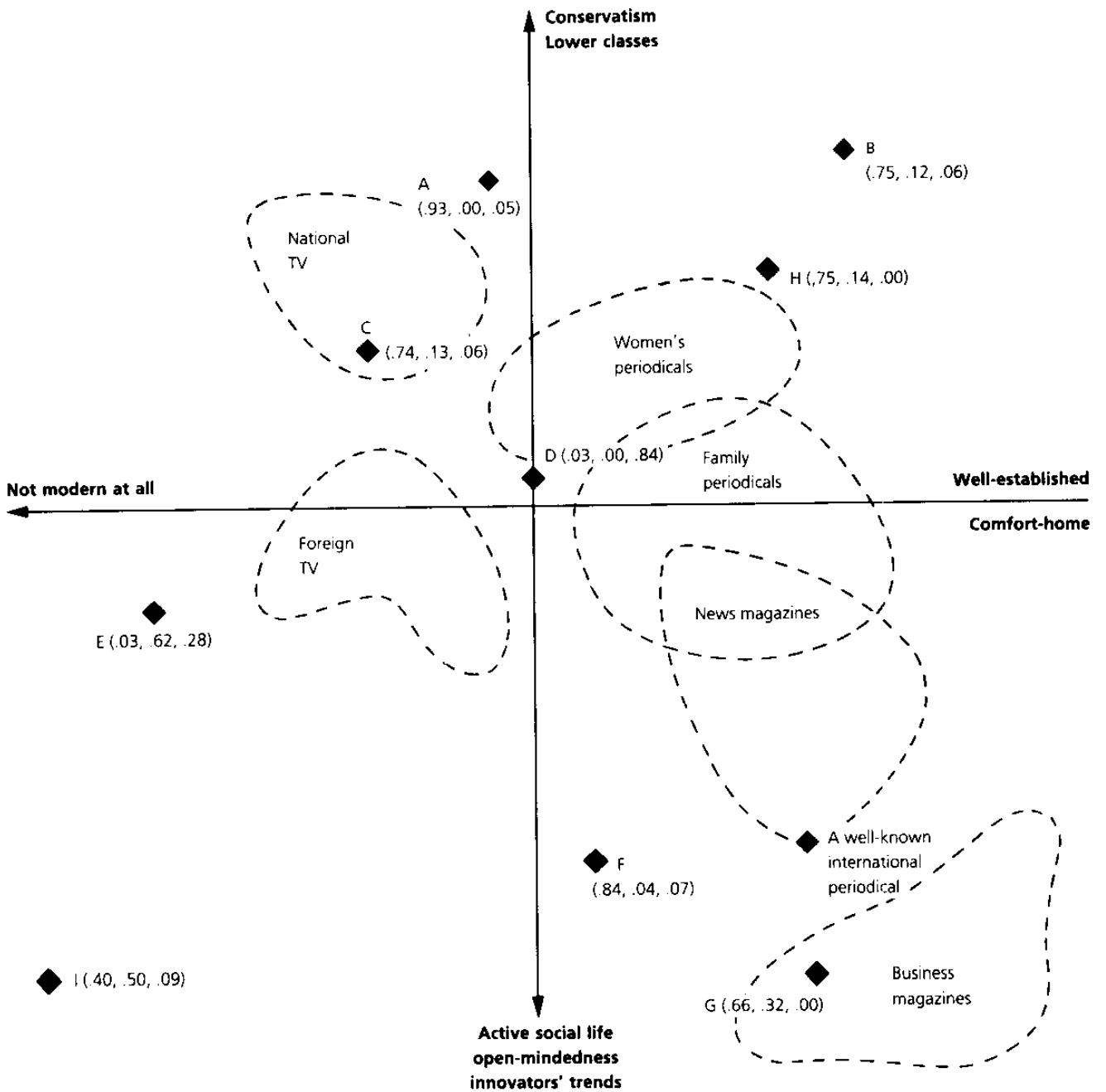
But it is of course, also possible to analyse markets



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**FIGURE 3**  
Positioning daily newspapers (some positionings of dailies)



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and to profile customers of well-defined products and brands in those same attitudinal terms, and for meeting these objectives too, these new classification criteria have proven to be very powerful and useful.

And the link with the media planning thinking and operations is a very direct one; both the target groups and the readerships are in fact indeed defined in the same file, using the same criteria.

Maybe one concrete example will be sufficient for

illustrating the process. For some car manufacturers, we described in terms of our 12 attitudinal factors the owners of vehicles of specific ranges or sectors and specific makes, and the gravity centres of these target groups were positioned (plotted) on the same graph as the readers of the main newspapers, as an illustration of the statistical relationship between the probability of buying a car of the type X and the probability of reading newspaper Y.