It is clear from *both* linguistic sub-sets that a higher percentage of consumers consume live events than consume goods. For non Gaelic speakers, Live events are of relatively higher importance than goods (8 of the top 10 consumption categories); For Gaelic consumers the relative importance is only slightly less (6 of the top ten categories). Again if the **top 5** categories are chosen as a benchmark then the importance of live events is magnified in each group - 4 out of 5 categories for each.

Importantly this implies that it is the artistic and cultural types of product, rather than the directly *linguistic* types of goods (i.e. such as Gaelic books) which are consumed most (and thus may be regarded as having most impact).

6.8. The Business side survey

In addition to evaluating consumer demand for GLAC related goods and services, a further area for investigation was the extent to which existing businesses within the area of the Gaelic economy sought to use GLAC related goods in furtherance of their own activities. As outlined in Chapter 4 (methodology) a random sample of 85 businesses employing 10 or more people within the geographical area was chosen and surveyed regarding this.[7]

In particular information was sought from respondents on 2 areas: details of how they used (or chose not to use) GLAC related products as an aid to their own business activities. Information was sought as to whether businesses used GLAC resources in product differentiation, or to gain a comparative advantage. Secondly details as to their views on the relevance of GLAC for business development was also sought.

6.8.1. The use of GLAC related goods and services

Of the 85 firms surveyed, 28 (33%) used GLAC related goods and services in one of 5 ways:

- The deliberate hiring of Gaelic speaking staff
- The use of Gaelic signs; bilingual documents; letters; menus etc

[7] A copy of the business questionnaire is supplied in the appendices

- The use of Gaelic or bilingual adverts to promote their establishment or products
- The use of Gaelic music as main entertainment or to create a background ambience
- The sponsorship of Gaelic events.

These areas of use are outlined below:

The deliberate hiring of Gaelic speaking staff
Twelve establishments reported this approach, with one establishment reporting a substantial impact on trade as a result, and the other establishments recording a moderate impact.

The use of Gaelic signs; bilingual documents; menus etc
Sixteen firms (18%) reported the use, to varying degrees of this approach. Amongst the firms which did adopt this approach, all cited customer preference as the rationale. In 40% of the firms who did so, substantial impacts on business were reported, with limited impacts reported in the remaining cases. In 5 cases, extensive use was made of this approach, with recognisable benefits reported. Here the ability to ascertain the Gaelic competence of actual or potential customers was stated as a pre-requisite, as was a high level of competence on the part of the staff of the establishment themselves.

The use of Gaelic or bilingual advertising
Four firms (5%) reported the deliberate use of Gaelic or bilingual adverts in order to attract clientele. In most cases this was part of a larger strategy such as that of using bilingual signage etc, and in all cases was explained as a conscious effort to attract those fluent in or sympathetic to the language. In three out of the four cases a successful outcome was reported by the respondent.

The use of Gaelic music for main entertainment or background ambience

Ten firms cited this use, with 7 specifically citing an attempt to gain comparative advantage. Of those, 40 % reported a substantial impact on trade. In each case these firms had used Gaelic music as live entertainment, with no direct entry charge. In the other examples, where Gaelic music had been used to create a background ambience, very little subsequent impact had been reported by the respondents.

Sponsorship of Gaelic events

Four firms reported this form of activity, in each case directly aiming to raise the profile of their establishment and reinforcing the local credentials of the firm and its commitment to the area amongst the Gaelic speaking community or those sympathetic to the language.

6.8.2. Constraints to the use of GLAC related goods

As reported above, twenty eight establishments reported the use of GLAC related goods and services. Of the establishments which reported non-use, forty firms (70%) reported that this was despite the fact that it would have been possible to use GLAC related products in some manner.

Given the importance of this decision, the firms in question were asked to identify the main reason for their non-use decision and what changes (if any) would lead them to possibly reconsider.

Reasons for non-use

These lay in two areas, firstly related to the business position of the firm, and secondly related to the linguistic competency or attitude of the manager/owner.

With regard to the business position of the firm, 27% of the firms perceived no demand for the use of GLAC related products or services; 6%, while perceiving a demand, believed it would be unlikely to be cost effective and 12% of the respondents did not have the authority to take such decisions, authority lying higher up in their organisational structure.

With regard to attitude or linguistic competency, 40% of non-use respondents reported that their own competence would be a problem in this regard; 9% reported that they had not thought of adopting such an approach and 6% were hostile.

Reasons which would lead to a re-consideration of non-use

Interestingly, 80% of the non-using firms reported that *clear evidence of demand from customers/ potential customers would be necessary before they would consider such a change.* Of further interest to policy practitioners is that the vast majority (80%) of the 40 firms who believed they could in future use GLAC related products were in the hotel and catering sector of the Gaelic economy.

6.8.3. Business views on links between GLAC and local economic development

An important area on which to analyse views was that of the business community in relation to GLAC and its implications for economic development. Views of the general public had already been sought on this area (see section 6.7, page 248). However, the views of the business community are clearly informed by a greater exposure to and involvement with, the pressures impacting on local economic development than is the case for many of the consumer survey respondents.

The areas upon which information was sought were three:

- The impact on the local economy
- The impact on the local labour market
- The impact on indirect economic variables

The impact on the local economy

Here, it is important to note that no negative responses were received to this. Views were sought on the perceived impact of GLAC on a range of issues as outlined below in Table 6-40

Table 6-40 General Impact of GLAC on issues affecting the local economy

	Very positive effect	Positive effect	No effect	Negative effect	Very negative effect
The regional image of the area for business	-	25%	74%	-	-
The attractiveness of the area for tourists	9%	59%	32%	-	-
The ability of local businesses to market products as 'unique' or distinct	12%	39%	50%	-	-
The range of business opportunities available in your area	3%	44%	53%	-	-
The ability of local businesses to sustain themselves	3%	43%	55%	-	-

With the exception of the issue of regional image, the businesses view of the impact of GLAC was generally very positive or positive for up to half of the businesses concerned.

The attractiveness of the area for tourists

The proposition that this was enhanced by GLAC was supported by almost 60% or respondents and strongly supported by almost another 10%. The majority of the respondents in this case were found to be from the hotel and catering industry, and interestingly those from the Western Isles were more positive (75%) than those from Skye and Lochalsh (50%).

The ability to market products as unique

This issue, which is at the heart of the question as to whether the distinctiveness of Gaelic may offer comparative advantage to businesses willing to take advantage of it, received strong support with half the respondents either seeing a positive or very positive effect as a result. Again support was stronger in the Western Isles, with 70% reporting positive or very positive, compared to 40% in Skye and Lochalsh. Interestingly, the least likely category of firms to support this positive perception was found to be the hotel and restaurant sector, where 60% reported that GLAC development had 'no effect' on marketing opportunities.

The range of business opportunities available

Here almost half of respondents reported positively or very positively. An interesting split was also evident between the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh, where in the former, only 35% reported positively compared to 80% of businesses in the latter area. It may be the case that a much higher proportion of business people who are positive (60%) are incomers compared to those who are native to the area (40%)

The ability of local businesses to sustain themselves

This again is impacted positively in the view of almost half the respondents (46%), a view, interestingly, which is generally uninfluenced by industrial sector, location or firm size.

Issues affecting the labour market are shown below in Table 6-41

Table 6-41 General impact of GLAC on issues affecting the Labour Market

	Very positive effect	Positive effect	No effect	Negative effect	Very negative effect
Local job opportunities for the young	10%	59%	31%	-	-
Local job opportunities for Gaelic speakers	20%	59%	22%	-	-
Local job opportunities for non-Gaelic speakers	-	46%	54%	-	-
The number of people now willing to return to your community to seek employment	5%	44%	51%	-	-
The quality of the jobs now available in your community	19%	37%	44%	-	-

Labour market impacts and locational/linguistic perception

Table 6-41 illustrates an overall very positive perception on a wide range of issues affecting local jobs, jobs for Gaelic and non-Gaelic speakers, together with perceived impacts on the crucial long term issue of young people returning to the islands. Favourable perceptions range from 77% in the case of local job opportunities for Gaelic speakers to 46% perceiving similar advantages for non-Gaels.

Interestingly the data also indicated a locational and linguistic difference in perceived impact regarding job opportunities for local young people, Gaelic and non-Gaelic speakers respectively, with those from the Western Isles tending to be more positive than those in Skye and Lochalsh. This may represent the current job distribution from investment in GLAC goods and services – the bulk of which is in the Western Isles. Respondents who were more fluent in Gaelic also tended to take a more positive view on these three issues than non-Gaelic speakers. This possibly reflects a higher awareness of job opportunities where Gaelic is preferred, or is essential.

Table 6-42 General impact of GLAC on indirect economic issues

	Very positive effect	Positive effect	No effect	Negative effect	Very negative effect
The willingness of people to start up businesses	-	26%	74%	-	-
The desire of people to live and work within their local community	5%	63%	32%	-	-
The attractiveness of the area to incomers	4%	62%	33%	1%	-
The attachment of local people to their community	8%	60%	33%	-	-
The level of self confidence within your local community	11%	56%	32%	1%	-

Table 6-42 above again indicates a very favourable response to the perceived impact of GLAC on the indirect, and possibly more long term issues facing the local community, such as the level of self confidence and the attachment of local people to their community.

In every case except that of people's willingness to start up new businesses, the favourable response is around the two thirds mark. In the case of willingness to start up new business, no respondent saw GLAC as a negative factor, and one quarter saw it as having a positive effect. Interestingly, regarding the latter result, evidence was also shown of differing sub-regional assessments or impact, with a much higher proportion of Skye based respondents positive (54%) compared to Western Isles respondents (19%).

It may be the case that given the higher prevalence of Gaelic in the Western Isles, it is not perceived as affording a particularly strong comparative advantage, whereas in Skye this may still remain the case.

6.9. Summary of findings of chapter 6

This chapter has isolated the main factors behind consumer demand for GLAC related goods (section 6.5 page 240): *locality/ rurality; income; gender; age and fluency.*

It has also analysed the demand from the business sector (section 6.8 page 264), and the manner in which this sector uses such goods – *the hiring of Gaelic speaking staff; use of Gaelic/bilingual documents/menus; Gaelic/bilingual adverts; use of Gaelic music as entertainment; sponsorship for Gaelic events.*

It has also indicated the constraints on the consumer side - mainly availability and price - (section 6.6), and the business sector – related to demand and to linguistic competency (section 6.8.2). The chapter has also indicated the positive impact of consumer consumption on a whole range of economic and social factors such as the use of the language; attachments to the local community; level of community confidence; plus the preference to purchase Gaelic goods (section 6.7). Importantly the business community also concurs with this positive assessment (section 6.8.3).

Finally in the case of individual consumption, the chapter has investigated which type of goods have the major impact on such factors (section 6.7.3).

The implications of the findings of Chapter 6 and of Chapter 5 are found in the context of the contemporary situation of policy towards Gaelic language, arts and culture. This is considered in Chapter 7.