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The Reading Motives Scale:
A Confirmatory Factor Analysis With Marketing Applications

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Abstract

The Uses and Gratifications literature is replete with numerous scales measuring people's motives for media-related activities as far flung as watching television, using the Internet, listening to radio. Factor analyses were performed in order to reduce scale items into relatively homogeneous factors with descriptive names. These factors were then used to better describe user motives for consuming the particular medium, and in numerous cases to predict that particular behavior. This study reports the use of the Reading Motives Scale, a scale developed to measure what uses and gratifications readers derive from reading books. An Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis were performed to analyze the data, with the result being four factors that account for approximately 70-percent of the variance. Marketing applications and implications are provided.

Reading Motivations: Uses and Gratifications of Avid Readers

While books have been around far longer than television, radio, and the Internet, reading motivations have been overlooked and underrepresented in uses and gratifications research. But with the influence of technology on readership through the introduction and proliferation of the electronic readers, books have become as technological as the Internet. E-readership is up 70% (Richtel & Miller, 2010), with e-books representing 7% of book sales (Hyatt, 2011) with projections of e-books representing 22.5% of all book sales by 2015 (PWC, 2011).

There are theoretical and practical reasons for studying uses and gratifications of reading books. "The uses and gratifications paradigm has proven helpful in identifying a variety of motives regarding media use and viewing patterns that reflect the utility, selectivity and intentionality of audience activity" (Ebersole & Woods, 2007, p. 24). These patterns are identified as either an instrumental orientation, reflecting more intentional media choices, or a ritualized orientation, reflecting less intentional choices (Rubin, 1993).

As with other media, it can be assumed that book choices are volitional and thus based on particular user goals. Still, there is a paucity of research examining reader motivations. One study did focus on ritualized and instrumental media orientations between new media (i.e., e-mail, Internet, and web) and traditional media (i.e., books and magazines, newspapers, telephone, and television) and found the use of traditional media to be more ritualistic (Metzger & Flanagin, 2002); but even the authors acknowledged that the clustering of media could "obscure the degree of audience activity for the traditional media cluster" (p. 347). The fact that multiple media forms were included in one study makes it difficult to draw conclusions about any one media form.

Breaking out individual media forms, such as looking at reading motivations on their own, will likely present a clearer picture of motivations than grouping media that have limited similarities. We start by looking at the cultural and historical influence of books and then address the current direction of uses and gratifications with the intention of linking the medium and theory.

Literature Review

Influence of Books

The National Endowment for the Arts has noted that Americans are reading less and comprehending less. By virtue of this, the societal implications are great (2004; 2007). Also relevant to this is the finding that "the number of books in a home is a significant predictor of academic

achievement" (NEA, 2007, p. 11). Proficiency in reading also increased the chances of landing financially rewarding jobs. Books thus play a very important role in our lives, and ignoring the importance of reading is detrimental at both personal and societal levels. Beyond these sobering facts, though, is that books and reading enrich lives. Said noted that "the book was, and to many people still is, a site of extraordinary human richness and significance" (2001, p. 12). Books, Said concluded, can influence our lives in both positive and negative ways depending on intent and motivations. Still, books remain a virtually overlooked medium in the field of communication research.

One study did, however, examine repeated exposure to media, including books, and found that despite the low likelihood of re-reading a book due to time constraints, "most of the participants can think of books they would like to reread and remember rereading books during childhood" (Hoffman, 2006, p. 392). Participants also reported that while they prefer to re-watch comedy films, "suspenseful, solemn, or profound books are reread far more frequently than humorous books" (Hoffman, 2006, p. 393). The reason for repeat exposure to media, including books, is likely due to the familiarity of the text or content, and thus the ability to predict the gratifications obtained. Hoffman also noted that "perhaps repeat exposure is in itself a social (group) experience" (p. 394). Through book clubs and shared exposure to a text or content, the experience is repeatable.

Uses and Gratifications

Blumler and Katz (1974) and other seminal media effects research envisioned uses and gratifications research as a movement away from exploring what media *do to* users and toward what users *do with* media (Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rosengren, 1983). Uses and gratifications research is predicated upon the assumption that the user actively and intentionally selects media based on "our psychological and social environment, our needs and motives to communicate, our attitudes and expectations about the media, functional alternatives to using the media, our communication behavior, and the outcomes or consequences of our behavior" (Rubin, 2002, p. 527). Despite the influence of media on consumer choices, it is speculated that individuals still control the decision, and "are often more influential in the selection process" (p. 531). This may be particularly true of reading, especially with the popularity of book clubs, as well as the possibility of vicarious repeat exposure as we pass books on to friends and family. Blumler (1979) and Abelman (2006) also report that users often make media selections that match their preexisting norms and values. We suspect that this would be especially true among avid readers.

Rubin (1983) created the Television Viewing Motives Scale (Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994), having adapted it from Greenberg's (1974) Viewing Motivation Scale, first for children and adolescents and later for adults. The TVMS has also been adapted for other media, including the Internet (e.g., Armfield, Dixon, & Dougherty, 2006). Repeated use and adaptation of the scales has led researchers to a variety of gratifications including Rubin's initial factors: learning, habit/pass time, companionship, escape, arousal, and relaxation (Rubin, 2002, p. 531), although the number and nature of factors derived has varied across studies..

A key perspective in uses and gratifications research has been the focus on audience activity (Levy & Windahl, 1984), in particular, the fact that audiences choose their media based on their own goals, having some control over their reading and viewing choices. With news and entertainment being the focus of most uses and gratifications research, adding reading motivations potentially strengthens audience activity research. Reading is as much a discretionary activity as are watching TV, listening to radio or using the Internet. While many entertainment choices occur "rather mindlessly" (Zillman, 1985, p. 228), reading is much more intentional than passively flipping through channels. Books are more

often purchased and read because of the person's specific interest in what the book has to offer, or on someone's recommendation. Books can also be stopped when the interest wanes. Further, unlike live television, we can skim through the pages of a book to see what is going to happen, and even how it ends, to determine our continued interest in reading the pages. This activity, in fact, may be done either in a store or online prior to purchasing the book. Although television viewing motives have been studied extensively with a well-established scale, little or no work has been done to study book reading motives. We thus ask the following:

RQ: What are the motives readers have for reading books?

We are interested in advancing uses and gratifications research into the medium of books, but also question whether readers seek and obtain gratifications similar to those of users of other media such as television, radio, and the Internet. The purposes of this study are thus to propose a scale that captures the motives of readers, as well as to perform both an exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis of this scale such that they can serve as a foundation for future research.

Method

In Spring 2011, data were collected using an online survey created with the Qualtrics survey software. The survey was administered to individuals 18 or older who self identified as avid readers, exemplified by the fact that the average number of books read per year was 17.3. Participants were solicited via the authors' Facebook accounts and a communication electronic mailing list attempting to reach a wide variety of demographics. A total of 266 usable surveys were submitted (roughly one-third male, two-thirds female). The average age was in the low-30s, and about 80% of respondents identified as Caucasian. The sample was a highly educated one, with slightly over one-half reporting holding an undergraduate degree or higher. About one-half of respondents indicated having an annual household income of $50,000 or higher.

The Survey of Reading Preferences was deployed using the Qualtrics online research suite. The online survey functioned equally well from desktop or mobile devices; the Facebook and email appeals could thus be launched anywhere rather than having to wait until returning to a desktop computer. The survey consisted of the Reading Motives Scale (RMS), which is our adapted version of the Television Viewing Motives Scale (Rubin, 1983; see Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994). Basic demographic information was collected (age, gender, ethnicity, education, etc.); participants were also asked to indicate how many books they read, on average, each year.

We began with the nine areas of uses and gratifications identified in Rubin's adapted scale for reading: relaxation, companionship, habit, pass time, entertainment, social interaction, information, arousal, and escape. The Television Viewing Motivation scale is considered to be reliable, as have other adapted versions. Since reading and watching television are two very different activities (i.e., one that is solo vs. one that can easily be done in a group), it was necessary to make adaptations to some of the items. Words that did not fit reading behavior were altered, and two items that were specific to television viewing were eliminated.

The resulting 25-item Reading Motives Scale (RMS) is an adaptation of Rubin's (1983) Television Viewing Motives Scale (TVMS), which was derived from Greenberg's (1974) seminal work. In the online format, the scale took about 4 minutes to complete. All statements were written in the affirmative voice, presented as Likert statements, and contained in a matrix; participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement regarding their reasons for reading: Strongly Agree

(5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The use of different response categories is found throughout the literature (Babrow, 1988), as is random or systematic ordering of the statements. The items in our RMS appeared in the same order as they did in Rubin's adaptation.

Results

A principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted on the 25 items comprising in the Reading Motives Scale (RMS) utilizing orthogonal rotation (VARIMAX). The sample exceeds the recommend ratio of 10 responses per variable (10:1) as recommended by Hair, et al (2010) with 266 usable responses. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling accuracy for the analysis; KMO=.890 is thus strong (Field, 2009). Bartlett's test of sphericity X^2 (300) = 5227.92, p<.001, indicates that correlations between items are sufficiently large for PCA.

Four factors were requested based upon the fact that the items were designed to index four factors (in order; see Table 1): factor 1 - relaxation, factor 2 - escape, factor 3 - passing time, and factor 4 - sharing / learning. After rotation, the first factor accounted for 24.4% of the variance, the second factor accounted for 15.1% of the variance, the third factor accounted for 13.7% of the variance, and the fourth factor accounted for 13.6% of the variance. Table X.X displays the items and loading factors for the rotated factors, with loadings of less than .50 omitted to improve clarity.

The PCA on the initial 25 items did result in dropping 2 of the items: number 5 - I read books when there is no one else to talk or be with, because it did not load at the .50 level or above on any factor; and number 21 - I read books because it is exciting, because it cross loaded on factors 1and 3 with values of .547 and .553 respectfully.

Given that the RMS is a scale modified and adapted from Greenberg's (1974) original Viewing Motivation Scale (VMS), the authors subjected the output from the PCA to a first order CFA model to test for factorial validity. The measurement theory can be represented by a model showing how well the measured variables converge to represent the constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

The initial model from the survey contains 4 factors and 25 items. The reliability and validity of the model's constructs were evaluated using CFA in AMOS. Maximum likelihood estimation was utilized for the analysis.

The initial specification of the model returned a normed X^2 of 6.300 at the .000 level of significance indicating that the fit of the model can be improved.

CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	56	1694.719	269	.000	6.300
Saturated model	325	.000	0		
Independence model	25	5415.236	300	.000	18.051

Further support for lack of fit is represented in the values of .629 for GFI, .721 for CFI and .616 for PNFI. All of these levels are below the acceptable level of .90 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, the return value for RMSEA of.141is above the acceptable level of .07 for a model with greater than 12 observable variables and a sample exceeding 250 (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

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RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.145	.629	.552	.521
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.448	.222	.157	.205

Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.687	.651	.723	.689	.721
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Parsimony-Adjusted Measures

Model	PRATIO	PNFI	PCFI
Default model	.897	.616	.647
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	1.000	.000	.000

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.141	.135	.148	.000
Independence model	.254	.248	.260	.000

An examination of the Average Extracted (AVE) indicates that two of the constructs, 2 and 3, fall below the accepted minimum of .50 for convergent validity with returned values of .488 and .445 respectfully.

	Factor 1	**Factor 2**	**Factor 3**	**Factor 4**
AVE	.651	.488	.445	.515

The model was respecified a number of times, removing items that hindered the overall goodness of fit of the model. The final respecification returned a normed X^2 of 2.724 at the .000 level of significance.

CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	29	133.455	49	.000	2.724
Saturated model	78	.000	0		
Independence model	12	2710.464	66	.000	41.068

The normed X2 coupled with returned values of .919 for GFI, .968 for CFI and a REMSEA of .081satisfy the requirements of 3 satisfactory indicators as per Hair et. al. (2010).

RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.100	.919	.870	.577
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.539	.299	.172	.253

Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.951	.934	.968	.957	.968
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.081	.064	.097	.001
Independence model	.389	.376	.401	.000

An examination of the Average Variance extracted (AVE) indicates that all 4 constructs exhibit convergent validity with values greater than .50 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). They all improved from their initial specification. Additionally, the construct reliability for each construct exceeds the .7 indicator of good reliability.

	Factor 1	**Factor 2**	**Factor 3**	**Factor 4**
AVE	.881	.714	.782	.718

	Factor 1	**Factor 2**	**Factor 3**	**Factor 4**
Construct Reliability	0.96	0.88	0.93	0.90

Discussion

Having found books to be neglected in media studies, this study served to apply the uses and gratifications scale typically used for television, Internet, and other media uses to reading motivations. By adapting the TVMS scale, we were able to get a sense of the gratifications sought by avid readers. The four factors we found yield great insight into exactly why people read books. Of these factors, the Relaxation factor explained the most variance, indicating these scale items were very effective in measuring the construct. Furthermore, this same factor yielded the highest construct reliability coefficient.

Thus, while all four factors are indicative of reading motives, the sample tested herein shows relaxation to be the most compelling motive for reading. Based on these results, the implications for marketers are that a primary focus of promotional activities should be on stressing the relaxation

afforded through reading. While the other three factors (escape, pass time and sharing/learning) also play a role in reading motives, it is relaxation that this sample of readers exhibits as their primary motive.

Though looking for individuals who self identified as "avid readers," we did not expect our sample to be necessarily comprised of heavy readers, yet our sample did read an average of nearly 1.5 books per month. An interesting application of the RMS would be to assess possible differences between different groups of readers (e.g., low, moderate, high), as well as non-readers. In other words, why do some people *not* read?

The four factors that we identified are closely aligned with the TVMS scale (Rubin, 1993 The motivations of pass time and escape would fit the ritualized orientation noted by Rubin (1993; 1994). There also was a correlation between the number of books read per year and the sharing/learning motivation, which is an instrumental orientation, and relaxation which is a ritualized orientation. It is not surprising that an instrumental motivation might be associated with heavier readers because they likely seek out books more purposefully than lighter readers. Further, heavy readers would understandably relax while reading, so it also is no surprise that relaxation is correlated with the number of books read per year. However, Rubin (1984) showed more emphasis on instrumental motives than ritual motives, although our findings do not match this conclusion. It is possible that motives measured in scales of this nature might differ depending on the scale.

It also is possible that the RMS might have missed motives. While our scale is derived and adapted directly from the TVMS, it is possible that reading and television viewing are not at all perfectly analogous activities. While one is solitary and the other has the potential for a group activity, it is possible there may be some motives for watching TV that do not apply to reading, and vice-versa. While our exploratory research indicated that the RMS scale was inclusive, further testing must be done to confirm this conclusion.

This study could be criticized on the grounds that it captures the inputs of but one sample of 266 individuals, but every effort was made to not have a solely convenient student sample. Appeals were made to Facebook friends and an electronic mailing list of professionals; this guaranteed that a fairly divergent group of people was solicited to participate. He fact that the sample skewed somewhat higher on education and income may have influenced the number of books read per year, which could have likewise exerted an influence on results of the scale items.

That the sample did included a wide age, income, and education range (albeit somewhat skewed) helps bolster our conclusion of validity. Still, multiple sampling efforts across a broad spectrum of individuals is required to further validate the scale.

It also is certainly possible that the person who purchases a book has very different reading motives than someone who borrows a book from a friend or a library, which this study did not seek to differentiate. The reading motives and experience may be quite different without the monetary cost. Finally, although we are pleased with the diverse sample, with the relative simplicity of the factor analysis and high degree of variance explained, we would be remiss if we did not indicate that internal validity is not a certainty. As mentioned above, other categories of readers, particularly less-frequent ones, should be sought to ensure a more inclusive sampling of readers. Additionally, in order to more fully establish the external validity of the RMS, replication will be required, not just among a sample similar to that reported herein, but across other categories of readers (frequency as well as type, such as paper, audio and e-book) and demographics. Further qualitative and quantitative efforts must be utilized

to affirm the various validities asserted above, as well as determine if any possible reading motives have been overlooked.

An interesting extension of this research would be to compare and contrast readers of traditional books with those who have made the transition to e-books. While no effort was made in this study to distinguish among these categories of readers, it is possible that differences exist between the groups. Exploratory research hinted that such a difference in reading experiences and motives exists, but it must be investigated in more detail.

Given that the stated aim of this study is to propose a new scale for reading motives, and then perform an Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis, the results are encouraging. Still, further deployments are required. Application of the scale on a diverse set of respondents is needed, with persons of all age, education, income, gender, and ethnicity categories represented not just in whole, but also in complex form.

Table 1
Factor Loadings for the Rotated Factors[a]

Question Number	Question	Component 1	2	3	4
1	I read books because it relaxes me	.802			
2	I read books because it allows me to unwind	.807			
3	I read books because it is a pleasant rest	.750			
4	I read books to keep me company		.597		
5	I read books when there is no one else to talk or be with				
6	I read books because they make me feel less lonely		.553		
7	I read books just because they are there				.662
8	I read books because I just like to	.766			
9	I read books because it is a habit, just something to do				.526
10	I read books when I have nothing better to do				.812
11	I read books because it passes the time, particularly when I am bored				.855
12	I read books because it gives me something to do to occupy my time				.761
13	I read books because it entertains me	.810			
14	I read books because it is enjoyable	.844			
15	I read books because it amuses me	.778			
16	I read books so I can talk with others about the stories			.731	
17	I read books so I can share stories with other family members or friends			.738	
18	I read books because it helps me learn things about myself and others			.717	
19	I read books so I can learn how to do things which I haven't done before			.734	
20	I read books because it is thrilling			.521	
21	I read books because it is exciting	.547		.553	
22	I read books because it peps me up				
23	I read books so I can forget about work, school or other things		.692		
24	I read books so I can get away from the rest of the family or others		.818		
25	I read books so that I can get away from what I am doing		.820		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. b. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

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