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Moviegoing in the Netflix Age: Gratifications, Planned Behavior, and Theatrical Attendance

Abstract

Innovations in digital technology have provided consumers with a variety of screens and portals through which they can access motion picture entertainment. This study sought to understand what factors motivate consumers to experience a film in the theater versus waiting to see the film at home, using home-viewing technology. Using the uses and gratifications framework coupled with the theories of reasoned action and planned behavior, this study employed a survey (N = 331) designed to measure gratification expectations and viewing intentions for five films that had not yet been released in theaters. The study found that while behavioral control and satisfaction with a consumer's theatrical and home viewing environment may play roles in determining the consumer's decision to see a movie in the theater, it is affective gratification expectations that exert the biggest influence on theatrical attendance across different types of films. In addition, subjective norms did not influence viewing intentions for any films employed in the study. The findings of this study suggest that audiences are increasingly selective about the types of films they choose to view in the theater, favoring exciting, visually enticing films.

Keywords
Movie theaters, home viewing technology, audiences, uses and gratifications, planned behavior, theatrical distribution

1. Introduction

It is not unusual for a small-budget, independent film from a well-known director to get a limited theatrical release after a successful festival run. However, before 2007, it was unheard of for a film to be made available through video-on-demand (VOD) services in advance of its theatrical release. For Brian De Palma's film Redacted, that's exactly what happened. Redacted was the first film to abandon the traditional distribution model and be made available for rent through cable and satellite services via Mark Cuban's HDNet Ultra VOD service before it premiered in theaters ("'Stunning' Redacted," 2007).

This represented a major break from a distribution model that had existed for decades. Prior to Redacted, the distribution cycle began with

theatrical release and ended with home release. While many believed this new distribution model would allow films to gain momentum going into their theatrical release, after several years of releasing films in this manner, distributors found that profits for VOD releases outpaced their theatrical profits by a two to one margin (Kaufman, 2008). The real value in VOD was that it provided another option to consumers.

While simultaneous VOD and theatrical release has given distributors a way to tap into an alternative revenue stream, digital streaming services have given independent filmmakers a way to cut out distributors entirely, circumvent the expensive theatrical step, and take their films directly to home-video or pay-television distribution. The Internet provides filmmakers with the tools to distribute their films digitally through online distribution channels such as iTunes, Amazon VOD, and Netflix's streaming service.

The success of these new approaches demonstrates that for some films, distributors may not be sure that consumers are willing to go see a movie at the theater, but they will pay to watch the film on their home television. The purpose of this study is to better understand what motivations best predict an individual's intention to experience a motion picture in the theater. One theoretical framework that has been employed to understand the active nature of media audiences is uses and gratifications. The uses and gratifications framework suggests that individuals actively use media to satisfy particular needs, and media compete with other sources of gratification (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). It has been used to better understand why individuals seek gratification from viewing films in the theater (Austin, 1986; Palmgreen, Cook, Harvill, & Helm, 1988) as well as television viewing (Bantz, 1982; Greenburg, 1974; Rubin, 1981, 1983). Palmgreen and Rayburn (1982, 1984) have applied the expectancy-value theory to the uses and gratifications approach to help quantify and predict individuals' gratification seeking intentions, and thus drawn a connection to the well-established theories of reasoned action and planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Uses and Gratifications

Uses and gratifications theory arose in the mid-twentieth century as researchers began to move from an emphasis on analyzing media as a source of persuasion to analyzing media as a source of entertainment and escape (Katz & Foulkes, 1962). Uses and gratifications research has focused on the particular needs individuals meet using media. Katz, Haas, and Gurevitch identified a list of over 30 needs; however, they were able to break this list of needs down into five important categories: 1) cognitive needs related to the expansion of information and knowledge, 2) affective needs related to a positive aesthetic or emotional experience, 3) integrative needs related to strengthening individual confidence and status, 4) *integrative needs* related to strengthening social contact, and 5) *needs for escape* and tension-release (1973: 166-167). Three basic categories can be further derived from these five categories: cognitive needs, affective needs, and integrative needs, since the need for escape could be seen as satisfying integrative needs in its ability to ease the tension of social expectations.

As stated before, studies of need gratification have varied. While some studies have taken a more general approach to studying mass media and its uses, drawing comparisons between media such as books, television, radio, and cinema (e.g. Katz et al., 1973; Peled & Katz, 1974; Swank, 1979), other studies have looked at a specific medium, notably television (Bantz, 1982; Greenburg, 1974; Rubin, 1981, 1983). Uses and gratifications theory has received considerable attention in the new century as researchers have used it to understand the Internet, social media, and applications (Ancu & Cozma, 2009; Armstrong & McAdams, 2011; Chung & Kim, 2008; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004;

Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017; Yang & Liu, 2017). Rather than focus specifically on the types of media, some recent research has paid close attention to the genre and type of content consumed (Greene & Krcmar, 2005; Hall, 2005; Hawkins et al., 2001). While there is value in studying media as a whole, a specific medium, or even the content or genre of content consumed through media, Bantz (1982) has suggested that the medium and the content consumed on the medium are related and should be treated as such. In a sense, this study of film distribution windows seeks to understand this interaction between media and content. As a film moves through its distribution channels, it crosses media platforms, from theatrical viewing to home viewing.

2.1.1. Understanding Cinema Attendance

When it comes to cinema, both Austin (1986) and Palmgreen et al. (1988) utilized the uses and gratifications approach to examine what motivated individuals to attend the movies. Both researchers discovered theatrical attendance stood out in its ability to provide social/integrative and affective gratifications, though they emphasized the medium's ability to meet cognitive needs should not be ignored. Both studies emphasized cinema's ability help individuals learn new things, learn about themselves, escape, be entertained, be affected emotionally, and connect with their social groups. Palmgreen et al. identified a factor called *great expectations* related to familiarity with the cast and source material. The impact of the cast, most notably star-power, has been shown to correlate with the success of motion pictures (Nelson & Glotfelty, 2012; Wallace, Seigerman, & Holbrook, 1993).

One important conclusion reached in the 1988 Palmgreen et al. study of film attendance was that movie theaters, with their ability to monopolize the viewer's attention with large screens, powerful sound systems, and a darkened environment that increases the emotional impact of their content, may provide a potentially more enjoyable and gratifying experience than other viewing media. Reeves, Lang, Kim, and Tatar (1999) have shown that the psychological arousal of media is greater on larger screens. They suggest that the same content shown on a larger screen may produce more excitement and be more enjoyable than when shown on a smaller screen. To go all the way down the tail of distribution to the point where movies are consumed on tablet computers or mobile devices, Ivory and Magee (2009) have concluded that consuming a film on a mobile device is not the same experience as consuming the same film on a larger screen, as mobile screens produce less physiological arousal. The psychological results are not just confined to screen size. Ramanathan and McGill (2007) have demonstrated that consuming a film with others can heighten the experience, potentially increasing the level of enjoyment.

2.2. The Theories of Reasoned Action and Planned Behavior

Palmgreen and Rayburn (1982, 1984) recognized that utilizing the expectancy-value model might better operationalize uses and gratifications theory's conceptualization of gratification seeking behavior. Just as the expectancy-value theory might predict behavior based on attitudes, seen as a product of beliefs and values, Palmgreen and Rayburn demonstrated that gratification seeking could be better understood utilizing a similar approach. However, Palmgreen and Rayburn's research came short of implementing Ajzen and Fishbein's more complete, theoretical approach to predicting behavioral intention, the theories of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985). The theories have been very useful in helping researchers understand health-related behaviors (e.g. Brubaker & Fowler, 1990; Brug, Lechner, & de Vries, 1995; McCaul, O'Neill, & Glasgow, 1988) as well as consumer behavior (e.g. Loken, 1983; Ryan, 1982; Warshaw, 1980). Meta-analytic review of the theory of reasoned action shows it to be highly predictive, even when used to investigate behaviors that fall outside of the model's original

conditions, such as introducing alternatives (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988). When the theory of reasoned action is expanded to the theory of planned behavior, the model has been shown to be increasingly predictive (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

2.2.1. Expectancy-Value

The expectancy-value theory (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein, 1963; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) is a key component of the theory of reasoned action. It sees an individual's attitude about a behavior as being a product of their beliefs about the behavior and their values. Key to this construct is the idea that attitudes are easiest to define when they are connected to a particular behavior. According to the theory, a person's attitude toward a behavior can be predicted by multiplying his or her evaluation of each of the consequences of the behavior by his or her belief that the behavior will lead to that specific consequence, and then summing the products.

Palmgreen and Rayburn (1982, 1984) used this expectancy-value approach to more accurately understand gratification seeking, thus bringing uses and gratifications research into the realm of reasoned action. As attitudes are a product of belief that a behavior has a consequence and the affective evaluation of that consequence, gratification seeking is the product of belief that a media possesses an outcome or attribute and the evaluation of that outcome or attribute. This model is aimed at a particular gratification sought. However, Palmgreen and Rayburn (1982) demonstrated that a summation of b_ie_i effectively related to a more generalized, summed model of gratifications sought (ΣGS_i). Babrow and Swanson (1988) have suggested that perhaps the b_ie_i attitudinal model does not unidirectionally influence a generalized GS_i. In fact, GS_i behavior might actually have a reverse influence on b_ie_i through wishful thinking or ego-defensiveness. In other words, GS_i, and attitude, while highly related, may not be the same thing, an assertion that Palmgreen and Rayburn (1982) acknowledged in their study. In addition, Palmgreen and Rayburn (1982) were careful to acknowledge that both the b_ie_i and GS_i models were not meant to be predictive of behavior, but rather orientation and intention. However, Babrow and Swanson (1988) have shown that both GS_i and b_ie_i do appear to impact not just intention, but exposure. While their relationship may not be explicit, their impact on behavior would appear to be clear.

Given the strong connection observed between gratification seeking, intention, and exposure (Babrow & Swanson, 1988; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1982; Rayburn & Palmgreen, 1984), as well as the heightened enjoyment afforded by experiencing a film on larger screens in earlier phases of the distribution window (Ivory & Magee, 2009; Palmgreen et al., 1988; Ramanathan & McGill, 2007; Reeves et al., 1999), it is expected that gratification seeking will predict theatrical viewing intention. In addition, given the cinema's strength as a means of escape and emotional fulfillment due to its unique, immersive nature (Bracken & Lombard, 2001; Palmgreen et al., 1988), and given that it is less useful as a means of information gathering (Austin, 1986), it is expected that affective gratifications will better predict theatrical viewing intention than cognitive gratifications. The following hypotheses are proposed:

H_1:Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by a film's gratification expectancy.

H_2:Affective gratification seeking will be a better predictor than cognitive gratification seeking of a film's theatrical viewing intention.

2.2.2. Subjective Norm

One aspect of Azjen and Fishbein's research (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) that Palmgreen and Rayburn (1982, 1984) did not address was the idea of subjective norm, as they were more interested in the relationship between attitude and gratifications sought. Ajzen and Fishbein describe the subjective norm as being an individual's perception of how

their social circle views a behavior. The subjective norm works alongside or against the individual's attitude to predict intention. Subjective norm is measured using an equation very similar to the one used to derive attitudes, replacing individual beliefs (b_i) with perceptions of the individual's social circle's beliefs about a behavior, and the individual's evaluation (e_i) with the individual's desire to comply with their social circle's wishes.

While Trafimow and Finlay (1996) have suggested that attitudes were a much better predictor of intentions than subjective norms, they found that subjective norms exerted more influence on intentions when the behaviors were social in nature. Given that integrative needs, such as the need to connect with friends and family, relieve loneliness, and integrate socially, have been associated with both the television and cinematic media (Austin, 1986; Bracken & Lombard, 2001; Katz et al., 1973), it would seem that understanding subjective norms as they relate to individual gratification seeking would increase the predictive power of the $b_i e_i$ model, not just of intention, but exposure as well. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_3: Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by a film's subjective norms.

2.2.3. Perceived Behavioral Control

Ajzen (1985) explored the idea that even though individuals may intend to take a certain action, factors beyond their control may intervene and prevent them from taking the desired action. Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is the perception that an individual has the level of behavioral control necessary to act in a given situation. As stated before, the addition of PBC to the reasoned action model increased its predictive power (Armitage & Conner, 2001). An individual may feel they lack the behavioral control to see a movie in a theater. Lack of income, transportation issues, safety concerns, personal issues relating to anxieties and handicaps, or merely the belief that the individual does not control which movies his or her household attends may create the feeling that the individual does not have control over his or her ability to attend the cinema. As such, measuring perceived behavioral control is important to understanding theatrical viewing intention. Concerning theatrical viewing intentions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{4a}: Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by perceived behavioral control with theatrical viewing.

H_{4b}: Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by negative perceived behavioral control with home viewing.

2.2.4. Other Beliefs

As Armitage and Conner (2001) have suggested, other normative beliefs, such as moral norms, descriptive norms, and self-identity have increased the predictive power of the planned behavior model. Cronan and Al-Rafee (2008) emphasized the influence of past behavior on future intentions. Cronin, Brady, and Hult (2000) have demonstrated that models of customer satisfaction correlate with behavioral intentions regarding the consumption of services, including entertainment. It is not unreasonable to expect that an individual's satisfaction with their personal media consumption experience will affect their future behavioral intentions. For the purposes of planned behavior, it is worth examining what role an individual's satisfaction with their own, local, movie-theater-going experience as well as their satisfaction with their home viewing experience play in their theatrical viewing intention. As such, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{5a}: Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by satisfaction level with an individual's theater experience.

H_{5b}: Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by negative satisfaction level with an individual's home viewing.

3. Method

In order to test the hypotheses, a cross-sectional, online survey was administered in the Southwestern United States (N = 331). Student respondents (N = 170) were drawn from introductory communication classes, and non-student respondents (N = 161) were drawn from a suburban chamber of commerce. The student sample was predominantly female (N = 115) and fairly evenly distributed between Hispanic or Latino (N = 37), African American/Black (N = 38), Asian (N = 39), and Caucasian (N = 39). The non-student sample was also predominantly female (N = 104) as well as predominantly Caucasian (N = 139). Table 1 presents a breakdown of the demographics of both samples. While the difference in average monthly home-viewing via Internet or cable between the student sample (M = 7.71, SD = 12.21) and chamber sample (M = 4.97, SD = 5.06) was significant, $t(322)$ = 2.61, $p < .05$, there was no significant difference between both samples for average monthly theatrical attendance (student: M = 1.55, SD = 1.33; chamber: M = 1.41, SD = 1.31; $t(327)$ = .94, $p > .05$) nor average monthly home movie rental or purchase (student: M = 2.56, SD = 3.63; chamber: M = 2.55, SD = 2.26; $t(324)$ = .02, $p > .05$). As such, the two groups were collapsed for all analysis. Within the collapsed group, there was no significant difference between men's viewing (M = 3.49, SD = 4.30) and women's (M = 3.41, SD = 3.15), $t(327)$ = .20, $p > .05$. The online survey consisted of two parts.

Table 1. Demographic Breakdown of Study Participants (N = 331)

	N	Percent
Non-Student Participants (N = 161)		
Gender		
Male	55	34.2
Female	104	64.6
Missing	2	1.2
Race		
Hispanic or Latino	12	7.5
African American/Black	5	3.1
Asian	0	0
Native American/Alaskan	1	0.6
Middle Eastern	1	0.6
Pacific Islander	0	0
Caucasian	139	86.3
Other	2	1.2
Missing	1	0.6
Student Participants (N = 170)		
Gender		
Male	55	32.4
Female	115	67.6
Race		
Hispanic or Latino	37	21.8
African American/Black	38	22.4
Asian	39	22.9
Native American/Alaskan	0	0

Middle Eastern	6	3.5
Pacific Islander	1	0.6
Caucasian	39	22.9
Other	8	4.7
Missing	2	1.2

Note. Average Age of Non-Student Participants = 43.7 (*SD* = 13.54). Average Age of Student Participants = 22.8 (*SD* = 6.09)

3.1. Part One

Part One of the survey was concerned with variables related to participants overall evaluation of their movie-going experience, rather than beliefs about particular films. As such gratification seeking evaluations, motivation to comply with social norms, perceived behavioral control, and viewing satisfaction were measured.

This study integrated gratifications identified in Austin's 1986 study and Palmgreen et al.'s 1988 study of cinema attendance. Austin's seven gratification measures and Palmgreen and Rayburn's ten gratification factors were synthesized and simplified to emphasize three categories of single-item gratification scales: cognitive gratifications, affective gratifications, and gratifications related to great expectations. The single-item, cognitive gratification scales were 1) to learn and experience new things, 2) to learn about oneself by identifying with a character or characters, and 3) to have a thought provoking experience. Affective gratifications were 1) to have a good time doing something entertaining, 2) to be affected emotionally, and 3) to experience stunning and/or exciting visuals and sounds. Gratifications related to great expectations were 1) to see familiar or favorite actors or actresses, and 2) to experience a familiar story or characters, such as through a book adaptation or sequel.

The evaluation (e_i) of each gratification was measured using a method similar to Palmgreen and Rayburn (1982). Respondents were asked to rate each gratification characteristic as to whether or not they feel the characteristic is a valuable thing for movies, in general, to have. Ratings were made on a seven-point, semantic differential scale, ranging from "not at all valuable" to "very valuable." Evaluations were determined for all eight gratification characteristics listed above. To be consistent with Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) approach, the seven-point scale was recoded to a scale ranging from negative three to positive three for data analysis. To complete the equation, beliefs about particular films were measured in Part Two.

Subjective norm was measured using Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) equation. Ajzen and Fishbein suggest that the subjective norm is best understood as the influence of people most important to the individual. Since Armitage and Conner (2001) have suggested that weaknesses in the predictive power of subjective norms have been attributed to inadequate measures, this study evaluated subjective norms across five single-item measures: 1) spouse/partner/romantic interest, 2) closest friend, 3) family, 4) social group, and 5) coworkers/classmates. As with gratification seeking, beliefs about particular films were measured in Part Two.

To measure the motivation to comply (m_i) with each social connection, respondents were asked to rate each social connection based on how important the social connection's opinion of a movie is to the individual's decision to see the movie. Ratings were made on a seven-point, semantic differential scale, ranging from "very unimportant" to "very important." As with gratifications, the seven-point scale was recoded to a scale ranging from negative three to positive three for data analysis.

To measure perceived behavioral control, respondents were then asked to consider obstacles they encounter when they wish to see a movie in the theater (e.g., affordability,

need for childcare) or at home (e.g., control over media choices, access to content or services). For each type of viewing, they were asked to answer two questions modified from the Bamberg, Ajzen, and Schmidt (2003) study. Using a seven-point scale, participants were asked how "easy" or "difficult" it is for them to see movies at the theater or at home, as well as how "high" or "low" they perceive their level of freedom to see movies at the theater or at home. The measures for level of difficulty and freedom were significantly correlated for both theatrical viewing, $r = .64$, $p < .001$, and home viewing, $r = .66$, $p < .001$.

Respondents' overall satisfaction with both their local movie viewing experience as well as their home viewing experience were measured using questions adapted from the Cronin et al. (2000) study. For both theatrical and home viewing, overall satisfaction was calculated as the mean between the respondent's assessment of the medium's quality (3 questions, theatrical Cronbach's alpha = .95, home Cronbach's alpha = .95), value (2 questions, theatrical Cronbach's alpha = .76, home Cronbach's alpha = .76) and satisfaction (3 questions, theatrical Cronbach's alpha = .86, home Cronbach's alpha = .89).

3.2. Part Two

In part two of the survey, gratification and normative beliefs as well as viewing intentions for five films were measured. Each film was scheduled to be released in 2014 after participants completed the questionnaire. The films included were a) *Captain America: The Winter Solder*, a large-budget, mainstream, sequel with blockbuster expectations presented in IMAX and 3D, b) *Belle*, an independent drama with a lesser-known cast, c) *Neighbors*, a mainstream comedy, d) *Bears*, a nature documentary, and e) *Sabotage*, a mainstream crime drama. The included films were used as they had varying levels of popularity and interest. For each film, information similar to what would be used to market the film was presented: an image of the film's poster, a brief synopsis of the plot, a brief description of the film's producers and director, and the names and pictures of the film's stars. Images and film information were derived from IMDb.com. Respondents were also given the ability to watch an embedded trailer of the film, linked from YouTube.com. Respondents were encouraged to take as much time as needed to become familiar with the films, and the order the films were presented to each respondent was random.

To complete the gratification seeking measure, beliefs (b_i) about whether or not the respondent felt each film would satisfy each of the eight gratifications identified in Part One were measured. For each gratification, a seven-point, Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," was utilized. As with evaluations, the seven-point scale was recoded to a scale ranging from negative three to positive three for data analysis. Upon completion of the survey, the belief score for each single-item gratification was multiplied by the evaluation score determined in Part One. The products for individual gratification expectancy-value measures were then summed to provide the overall gratification-seeking score for each gratification category. These categories represented the sums of associated single-item gratification measures. This calculation was completed separately for each film the respondent was asked to evaluate.

As with gratification seeking, to complete the social norm measure, respondents' beliefs (b_i) about each social connection's opinion of the film were measured using a seven-point, Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The seven-point scale was recoded to a scale ranging from negative three to positive three for data analysis. The belief score for each social connection was multiplied by the motivation score of that social connection. These products were then summed to provide the overall subjective norm score. This calculation was completed separately for each film the respondent was asked to evaluate.

Finally, the dependent variable, theatrical viewing intention, was measured for each film by asking respondents where they were most likely to view each film for the first time using the following scale: 1) definitely wait to see it at home, 2) probably wait to see it at home, 3) likely wait to see it at home, 4) not sure, 5) likely see it in the theater, 6) probably see it in the theater, and 7) definitely see it in the theater. Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for all survey measures, including the dependent variable.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Survey Measures

	Films Included in the Study									
	Captain America		Belle		Neighbors		Bears		Sabotage	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Cognitive Grats.										
Learn & experience new things	.25	3.19	1.98	3.25	-.70	3.84	2.51	3.41	-.45	3.42
Learn about oneself	.18	3.60	1.43	3.29	-.55	3.98	-.03	3.65	-.75	3.73
Thought provoking experience	.20	3.94	2.74	3.71	-1.78	4.17	2.06	3.55	-.89	4.08
Sum – Exp. Value	.64	9.26	6.19	8.40	-3.04	10.4	4.58	7.59	-2.1	9.71
Affective Grats.										
Have a good time	3.63	4.20	2.45	4.15	2.15	5.24	2.30	4.17	1.52	4.69
Be affected emotionally	2.17	4.37	3.32	4.29	-.31	5.32	2.63	4.39	.66	4.80
Exciting visuals & sounds	3.33	3.67	.97	3.44	-.47	4.32	2.35	3.71	2.20	3.93
Sum – Exp. Value	9.13	10.2	6.78	9.81	1.34	12.5	7.27	10.1	4.36	11.2
Great Ex. Grats.										
Familiar actors or actresses	1.85	3.83	.15	3.80	1.43	4.03	-.84	4.48	1.33	3.56
Familiar story or characters	2.22	3.75	.01	4.00	-.57	4.62	-1.19	4.40	-.34	4.15
Sum – Exp. Value	4.08	6.33	.16	6.47	.86	7.36	-2.09	7.51	.97	6.16
Subjective Norm										
Spouse/Partner	1.45	4.03	.20	4.13	.38	4.64	.61	4.02	.63	4.26
Closest Friend	.64	3.24	.24	3.49	.32	4.14	.40	3.48	.39	3.53
Family	.51	3.39	.36	3.25	.66	3.79	.44	3.43	.66	3.41
Social Group	.04	3.17	.32	2.98	.05	3.73	.54	3.16	-.04	3.28
Coworkers or Classmates	-.45	3.40	.41	2.92	-.09	3.90	.79	3.22	.37	3.26
Sum – Exp. Value	2.28	12.12	1.60	11.27	1.36	14.6	2.73	12.0	1.98	12.6
Dependent Variable										
Theatrical Intention	4.32	2.00	3.17	1.75	3.62	1.96	3.00	1.75	3.02	1.74
P.B.C.										
Theater	4.82	1.62								
Home	5.75	1.42								
Satisfaction										
Theater	5.14	1.04								
Home	5.65	1.02								

Note. Grats. = Gratifications, Exp. = Expectancy, Ex. = Expectations, P.B.C. = Perceived Behavioral Control

4. Results

For each of the five films evaluated in the study, hierarchical regressions were employed to test the hypotheses and examine the relationship between the independent variables and respondents' intention to see the film in the theater versus at home. All statistical tests were

conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics for Macintosh, version 22.0. Entered into the first step for each regression was the relationship between perceived behavioral control for both theatrical viewing and home viewing. The second step introduced the respondents' overall satisfaction with both theatrical and home viewing. Finally, the third step introduced variables specific to each film: cognitive gratification seeking, affective gratification seeking, great expectation gratification seeking, and subjective norm. Tables 3-7 present each regression analysis. No tolerances were less than .45 and no variance inflation factors exceeded 2.1 for any variables in any of the regressions, suggesting a lack of multicollinearity.

Table 3. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Theatrical Attendance for Captain America (N = 309)

Variables	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Block 1									
PBC - Theater	.17	.07	.14*	.14	.08	.11	.11	.07	.09
PBC - Home	-.15	.08	-.11	-.11	.09	-.08	-.15	.08	-.11*
Block 2									
Satisfaction - Theater				.26	.11	.14*	.02	.10	.01
Satisfaction - Home				-.14	.12	-.07	-.23	.11	-.12*
Block 3									
Cognitive Gratif.							.01	.01	.05
Affective Gratif.							.08	.01	.41+
Great Ex. Gratif.							.03	.02	.08
Subjective Norm							.01	.01	.07

Note. PBC = Perceived Behavioral Control, Gratif. = Gratifications, Ex. = Expectations.
Step 1: $R^2 = .02$, $F (2, 307) = 3.38$, $p < .05$.
Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\Delta F (2, 305) = 2.81$, $p > .05$.
Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .22$, $\Delta F (4, 301) = 22.21$, $p < .001$.
*$p < .05$, +$p < .001$.

Table 4. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Theatrical Attendance for Belle (N = 311)

	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
Variables	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Block 1									
PBC - Theater	.15	.06	.15*	.12	.06	.12*	.12	.06	.12*
PBC - Home	-.28	.07	-.23+	-.24	.07	-.20**	-.20	.07	-.16**
Block 2									
Satisfaction - Theater				.17	.10	.11	.12	.10	.07
Satisfaction - Home				-.18	.10	-.11	-.17	.10	-.10
Block 3									
Cognitive Gratif.							.01	.02	.06
Affective Gratif.							.03	.01	.17*
Great Ex. Gratif.							.03	.02	.10
Subjective Norm							.01	.01	.09

Note. PBC = Perceived Behavioral Control, Gratif. = Gratifications, Ex. = Expectations.
Step 1: $R^2 = .05$, $F (2, 309) = 8.39$, $p < .001$.
Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\Delta F (2, 307) = 2.58$, $p > .05$.
Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .08$, $\Delta F (4, 303) = 6.90$, $p < .001$.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, +p $< .001$.

Table 5. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Theatrical Attendance for Neighbors (N = 306)

	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
Variables	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Block 1									
PBC - Theater	.19	.07	.15*	.15	.07	.12*	.14	.06	.12*
PBC - Home	-.17	.08	-.13*	-.10	.08	-.07	-.15	.07	-.11*
Block 2									
Satisfaction - Theater				.25	.11	.13*	.22	.09	.11*
Satisfaction - Home				-.36	.12	-.19**	-.25	.10	-.13*
Block 3									
Cognitive Gratif.							.01	.01	.05
Affective Gratif.							.06	.01	.39+
Great Ex. Gratif.							.05	.02	.18**
Subjective Norm							-.01	.01	-.03

Note. PBC = Perceived Behavioral Control, Gratif. = Gratifications, Ex. = Expectations
Step 1: $R^2 = .03$, $F (2, 304) = 4.16$, $p < .05$.
Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F (2, 302) = 5.92$, $p < .01$.
Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .30$, $\Delta F (4, 298) = 34.37$, $p < .001$.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, +p $< .001$.

Table 6. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Theatrical Attendance for Bears (N = 310)

Variables	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Block 1									
PBC - Theater	.21	.06	.19**	.17	.07	.16**	.19	.06	.18**
PBC - Home	-.16	.07	-.13*	-.11	.08	-.09	-.07	.07	-.06
Block 2									
Satisfaction - Theater				.24	.10	.14*	.21	.09	.12*
Satisfaction - Home				-.20	.11	-.11	-.25	.10	-.14*
Block 3									
Cognitive Gratif.							.002	.02	.01
Affective Gratif.							.05	.01	.30+
Great Ex. Gratif.							.04	.01	.17**
Subjective Norm							.01	.01	.04

Note. PBC = Perceived Behavioral Control, Gratif. = Gratifications, Ex. = Expectations
Step 1: $R^2 = .04$, $F (2, 308) = 5.99$, $p < .01$.
Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\Delta F (2, 306) = 3.81$, $p < .05$.
Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .14$, $\Delta F (4, 302) = 12.77$, $p < .001$.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, +$p < .001$.

Table 7. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Theatrical Attendance for Sabotage (N = 307)

Variables	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Block 1									
PBC - Theater	.24	.06	.23+	.21	.06	.19**	.17	.06	.16**
PBC - Home	-.24	.07	-.20**	-.19	.07	-.16**	-.22	.07	-.18**
Block 2									
Satisfaction - Theater				.25	.10	.15**	.22	.09	.13*
Satisfaction - Home				-.14	.10	-.08	-.12	.09	-.07
Block 3									
Cognitive Gratif.							.03	.01	.15*
Affective Gratif.							.02	.01	.15*
Great Ex. Gratif.							.05	.02	.19**
Subjective Norm							.01	.01	.05

Note. PBC = Perceived Behavioral Control, Gratif. = Gratifications, Ex. = Expectations
Step 1: $R^2 = .06$, $F (2, 305) = 9.64$, $p < .001$.
Step 2: $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\Delta F (2, 303) = 3.76$, $p < .05$.
Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .15$, $\Delta F (4, 299) = 14.42$, $p < .001$.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, +$p < .001$.

Hypothesis one proposed that a film's gratification expectancy will predict the film's viewing intention. Based on the regression analysis, at least one gratification category exerted significant influence for every film. Specifically, *Captain America* had one gratification significant (Affective, $B = .08$, *SE B* $= .01$, $p < .001$), as did *Belle* (Affective, $B =$

.03, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .05), *Neighbors* had two (Affective, *B* = .06, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .001, and Great Expectation, *B* = .05, *SE B* = .02, *p* < .01), *Bears* had two (Affective, *B* = .05, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .001, and Great Expectation, *B* = .04, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .01), and *Sabotage* had all three (Cognitive, *B* = .03, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .05, Affective, *B* = .02, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .05, and Great Expectation, *B* = .05, *SE B* = .02, *p* < .01). In addition, the addition of the gratification variables in the third step of each regression explained most of the variance in the models (Captain America: 22%, Belle: 8%, Neighbors: 30%, Bears: 14%, and Sabotage: 15%). This hypothesis was therefore supported, since gratifications exerted a significant influence on viewing intention for all five films.

Hypothesis two proposed that in comparison to cognitive gratification seeking, affective gratification seeking will better predict a film's viewing intention. Affective gratification seeking exerted a significant influence on theatrical viewing for all five films (*Captain America*, *B* = .08, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .001, *Belle*, *B* = .03, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .05, *Neighbors*, *B* = .06, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .001, *Bears*, *B* = .05, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .001, and *Sabotage*, *B* = .02, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .05), while cognitive gratification seeking was significantly influential on viewing intention for only one film, *Sabotage* (*B* = .03, *SE B* = .01, *p* < .05), which supports this hypothesis.

Hypothesis three proposed that a film's subjective norms will predict the film's viewing intention. Subjective norms did not exert significant influence on theatrical viewing for any of the five films. This hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis four had two parts: a) an individual's perceived behavioral control with theatrical viewing will predict the film's theatrical viewing intention, and b) an individual's negative perceived behavioral control with home viewing will predict the film's theatrical viewing intention. Perceived behavioral control over theatrical viewing exerted a significant positive influence in four of the five films: *Belle* (*B* = .12, *SE B* = .06, *p* < .05), *Neighbors* (*B* = .14, *SE B* = .06, *p* < .05), *Bears* (*B* = .19, *SE B* = .06, *p* < .01), and *Sabotage* (*B* = .17, *SE B* = .06, *p* < .01). A negative perceived behavioral control over home viewing also exerted significant influence in four of the five films: *Captain America* (*B* = −.15, *SE B* = .08, *p* < .05), *Belle* (*B* = −.20, *SE B* = .07, *p* < .01), *Neighbors* (*B* = −.15, *SE B* = .07, *p* < .05), and *Sabotage* (*B* = −.22, *SE B* = .07, *p* < .01). In addition, the addition of the behavioral control variables in step one of each regression explained only a small amount of the variance (Captain America: 2%, Belle: 5%, Neighbors: 3%, Bears: 4%, and Sabotage: 6%). As such, and given the expected relationships with perceived behavioral control for both theatrical and home viewing were present in four of the five films, this hypothesis was partially supported.

Hypothesis five also had two parts: a) satisfaction level with an individual's theater experience will predict a film's theatrical viewing intention, and b) negative satisfaction level with an individual's home viewing will predict a film's theatrical viewing intention. Theatrical satisfaction exerted significant positive influence on theatrical viewing in three of the five films: *Neighbors* (*B* = .22, *SE B* = .09, *p* < .05), *Bears* (*B* = .21, *SE B* = .09, *p* < .05), and *Sabotage* (*B* = .22, *SE B* = .09, *p* < .05). Negative satisfaction with home viewing exerted significant influence in three of five films, as well: *Captain America* (*B* = −.23, *SE B* = .11, *p* < .05), *Neighbors* (*B* = −.25, *SE B* = .10, *p* < .05), and *Bears* (*B* = −.25, *SE B* = .10, *p* < .05). As with behavioral control, the addition of the satisfaction variables into each model explained only a small amount of the variance (Captain America: 2%, Belle: 2%, Neighbors: 4%, Bears: 2%, and Sabotage: 2%). With satisfaction exerting influence as expected for at least three of the five films for both theatrical and home viewing, this hypothesis was partially supported.

Results of hypothesis testing parsed by films included in the study are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Results of Hypothesis Testing by Film

	Hypothesis	Films Included in the Study				
		Captain America	Belle	Neighbors	Bears	Sabotage
H1	Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by a film's gratification expectancy.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
H2	Affective gratification seeking will be a better predictor than cognitive gratification seeking of a film's theatrical viewing intention.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
H3	Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by a film's subjective norms.	No	No	No	No	No
H4a	Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by perceived behavioral control with theatrical viewing.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
H4b	Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by negative perceived behavioral control with home viewing.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
H5a	Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by satisfaction level with an individual's theater experience.	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
H5b	Theatrical viewing intention will be predicted by negative satisfaction level with an individual's home viewing.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

Note. Yes = Regression results support the hypothesis. No = Regression results do not support the hypothesis.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand why individuals would choose to experience a motion picture in the theater versus utilizing home viewing technology. Using the uses and gratifications framework and the theory of planned behavior, it was determined that affective gratifications best predicted theatrical viewing intention, though other gratifications as well as behavioral control and satisfaction with viewing environments did contribute to individuals' viewing intentions.

Consistent with previous research exploring the uses and gratifications of theatrical attendance (Austin, 1986; Bracken & Lombard, 2001; Palmgreen et al., 1988), affective gratifications significantly explained theatrical attendance across all films employed in the study. Given the increase in clarity given to each film's model with the addition of gratifications, and given affective gratification's significance across all five films, it is safe to say the most important factor in determining theatrical attendance was affective gratifications. This gives credence to the assertion made by Palmgreen et al. (1988) that the immersive nature of theatrical attendance has the ability to heighten the gratifications experienced in movie theaters. Furthermore, while this study did not find cognitive gratifications to be a significant predictor of theatrical attendance, cognitive gratifications may still be an important aspect of film viewing. Individuals may decide to watch films they feel offer strong cognitive gratifications at home as opposed to seeking the more immersive, theatrical experience.

The lack of significant influence on intention exerted by subjective norms was surprising given the social gratifications derived from movie attendance (Austin, 1986; Bracken & Lombard, 2001; Palmgreen et al., 1988). However, this could be attributed to the fact that integrative gratifications and subjective norms are different concepts. It is possible that had integrative gratifications been investigated instead of subjective norms, the study could have yielded different results. As Trafimow and Finlay (1996) have suggested, subjective norms are not as good a predictor of behavior as attitudes (in this case, gratification seeking). Of course, Trafimow and Finlay suggested that activities that are social in nature could be predicted by subjective norms. Given the social nature of theatrical attendance, it was expected that social influence would exert influence. The distinction might be that this study explored intention, and not behavior. It is possible that were this survey to be repeated post-movie-release, the influence of subjective norms might be more significant. Different results may be measured when short-range intentions or actual behavior are measured.

The addition of respondents' perceived behavioral control over both home and theatrical viewing did partially influence intentions as predicted. While perceived behavioral control was not as significant a factor as gratification seeking, its success across four films reinforces its position as an important addition to the theory of reasoned action. As with perceived behavioral control, respondents' satisfaction with theatrical and home viewing partially influenced intentions as predicted, demonstrating the validity of including other norms in research utilizing the theory of planned behavior. Given these findings, future research should seek to expand the norms and variables examined to include factors such as willingness to pay (price-point), consumer preferences, franchise loyalty, and the consumer perception of trends.

Given the significance of gratification seeking in predicting exposure, the relevance of Palmgreen and Rayburn's (1982, 1984) expectancy-value approach to uses and gratifications research was supported. While attitudes and gratification seeking may not be the same concept, gratification seeking's influence on intention as realized using the expectancy-value model behaves in a manner consistent with the theories of reasoned action and planned behavior. A similar approach could be used to better understand intentions related to other mass media behaviors, including new media such as social media and smartphone-based applications. The relationship between gratifications and intention in this study were solid, and as such, further investigation may yield similar results.

However, it is important to note that the relationship is between gratification seeking and intention, not gratification seeking and behavior or gratifications obtained. The movies included in this study were chosen in advance, because this study was primarily interested in the influence each factor exerted on intention, as modeled after Palmgreen and Rayburn's 1982 study. Palmgreen and Rayburn were careful to note that their study was focused on intention, and not behavior, so the same distinction should be made here. However, as Babrow and Swanson (1988) have suggested, gratification seeking is not just predictive of intention, but also exposure. As such, future research should seek to determine the relationship between intention and actual viewing to test the role that gratification seeking plays in predicting behavior, and not just intention.

This study examined intention for five films, all of which were to be released about the same time. Given that respondents on average attend less than two films per month, it is expected that even if an individual intended to see all five movies as measured in this survey, he or she would most likely see two of the movies, at most. As such, while the connection between intention and behavior may be strong, future research should seek to understand actual behavior when it comes to which movies consumers choose to view in the theater versus viewing at home.

6. Conclusion

The significant influence affective gratifications exert on theatrical attendance suggested by this study supports Hollywood's focus on releasing big-budget, escapist, thrilling movies that depend on special effects, exciting visuals, and big sounds. While it would be incorrect to assume based on this study that general demand is lacking for more thoughtful, smaller films, this study suggests that there is less demand for such films in theaters. In the digital age, films that offer cognitive gratifications at greater levels than affective gratifications may not find success in a strict, theater-first distribution model. The success of simultaneous VOD and theatrical release models is evidence of this shift in viewing behavior, as many films released in this manner fall into the category of smaller, independent films that may lack the big experience of large, tentpole releases from major studios.

While this study suggests that affective gratification seeking exerts the greatest influence on intention, respondents' evaluation of both their home and theatrical viewing environments and ability to watch movies were partially influential on their viewing intention. The motion picture industry, and in particular the distributors and theaters responsible for exhibiting films, would be wise to consider the influence the increasing quality of home viewing technology is exerting on consumers' decisions to view films at home versus in the theater. Theater owners are not just competing with other theaters in their area, but they are competing with an increasingly satisfactory home viewing experience. As such, distributors and theaters should devote attention to differentiating the theatrical viewing experience from the home viewing experience.

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