

An application of uses and gratifications theory to compare consumer motivations for magazine and Internet usage among South African women's magazine readers

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ABSTRACT

Uses and gratifications theory provides an analytical framework for explaining consumer motivations for media usage. In this study, uses and gratifications theory was used to compare the motivations for using magazines and the Internet among women's magazine readers in South Africa. By focusing on the usage of the two media, the study aimed to provide a lens through which women's magazine publishers could view opportunities for online publishing. A web-based survey instrument was used to collect data. A factor analysis of this data identified seven gratification factors for Internet usage and six gratification factors for magazine usage. The findings also revealed that magazine usage provided superior gratification on more dimensions of gratification factors than Internet usage.

Key words: magazines, media consumption, print media, online consumer behaviour, uses and gratifications, Internet, women

Introduction

The Internet has only recently gained considerable attention as an area for mass media research. According to McQuail (2005: 138), researchers have "overlooked not only the Internet but the entire field of computer-mediated communication". However, it has experienced unabated growth since its advent. In South Africa, 4.5 million people have Internet access (Goldstuck 2009). This constitutes roughly

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10% of the South African population, and the number is set to double over the next five years (Goldstuck 2009). For a significant part of the world's population, online access is no longer considered an 'extra' or luxury, but a necessity. Consequently, the importance of the Internet as a mass communication medium and promising e-commerce channel has increased significantly (Nielsen 2009).

The Internet has a number of unique characteristics that set it apart from traditional media. It is interactive (Rafaeli & Sudweeks 1997) and it has global reach (Berthon, Pitt & Watson 1996). To establish a presence on the Internet is relatively cheap and easy (Berthon et al. 1996) and it allows for more sophisticated audience segmentation (Ko, Cho & Roberts 2005: 57). These characteristics have turned the Internet into a 'virtual marketplace' (Ko et al. 2005: 57) where interactive tools can be used to enable businesses to build and strengthen relationships with consumers. However, capturing online audiences remains elusive (Gallaughier, Auger & BarNir 2001). For example, in South Africa, one of the most popular magazine brands *Cosmopolitan*, can only garner an average of 6 000 visitors a month to its online website, while its print version sells more than 100 000 magazines a month (Nielsen-Online 2008).

The Internet has brought about seismic shifts in the marketing industry and consumer behaviour. Importantly, the Internet's ability to attract consumers and advertisers is influencing the strategies of traditional media companies such as consumer magazine publishers (Troland 2005). Readers of print media such as magazines and newspapers are increasingly expecting online versions (PWC 2009). However, it is unclear whether or not the Internet is a substitute for, or supplement to, traditional media. For example, while some studies suggest that the Internet has negatively affected time spent watching TV (O'Toole 2000), other studies suggest that the Internet is not a substitute for, but a supplement to, traditional media (Kink & Hess 2008). Media substitution theorists argue that traditional media will be replaced with new media if consumers perceive them to be functionally superior (for example, better quality content, improved delivery, enabling more choice) than older, traditional media (Kaye & Johnson 2003).

This study focuses on the consumer magazine industry in South Africa. Consumer magazines are those magazines with editorial content written for the average citizen (Pis Diez 2007); which carry advertising for products (Payne, Severn & Dozier 1988); are listed as a consumer magazine by the Audit Bureau of Circulations in South Africa (ABC 2009); and are distributed through newsstands, retailers, as well as through subscriptions (Payne et al. 1988). These magazines are managed as 'profit-making businesses' (Pis Diez 2007: 195) with two revenue streams – advertising and circulation.

In South Africa, consumer magazines are a successful category of the print media sector (Rohwer 2008). Their business logic – using journalistic content to segment and target consumers and in turn, attracting advertising revenue – has been successful for almost a century (Claassen 1998). According to the Magazine Publishers' Association of South Africa, approximately 115 million consumer magazines are distributed nationally each year (Rohwer 2008). Due to the unreliability of postal services, 86% of magazine purchases are done via newsstand distribution in retail stores rather than by subscriptions (Scholtemeyer 2005). Consequently, the majority of circulation is heavily dependent on 'impulse buys' at point of sale positions in stores (Hunt 2007). This feature of the industry is important to this study, as South African magazines do not have a large loyal subscriber base, which means they have to invest large sums of money to attract readers who are not loyal subscribers and who are also wooed by various other media, including the web (Barsh, Shao-Chi Lee & Miles 1999).

Some researchers (such as Picard 2003; Ellonen, Kuivalanen & Jantunen 2008) maintain that the Internet will continue to have a disruptive effect on the print media industry. To gain a competitive advantage, many print businesses, including magazine publishers, are seeking to harness the potential of the Internet to maintain relationships with their readers (Barsh et al. 1999) and to gain a strategic advantage over competitors (Ellonen et al. 2008). McQuail (2005: 361) explains that "an increasingly important way that a major magazine company tries to keep advertisers and get new ones is to position every title not just as paper-bound reading material but as a personality – a brand – which readers want to engage in many areas of their lives". A major way of achieving this is developing magazine websites or digital versions of the print product (McQuail 2005). In fact, according to research, creating successful websites has become the "single most important strategy for publishers" (World Wide Worx 2009).

Considering the ever-increasing importance of the Internet, it is important for both researchers and practitioners to understand the different reasons why audiences use the Internet. As consumers are faced with more and more media to choose from, getting to the heart of these consumer needs will become more important for traditional media publishers (Hassan, Craft & Kortan 2003). It is argued that uses and gratifications theory – a research approach that has been applied to understanding audience consumption of traditional media – would be an appropriate theoretical framework from which to undertake research on the Internet (Morris & Ogan 1996; Rafaeli 1986; Ruggiero 2000). At the heart of uses and gratifications theory (UGT), is the concept of an active audience. In communication theory, this means that audiences are not passive receivers of messages, but active participants who make

conscious decisions based on different social and psychological reasons about what media they consume and how they consume these (McQuail 2005).

The readership of magazines targeted at women will be investigated in this study, because women's magazines constitute more than 40% of the magazine industry in South Africa. If the print media industry is facing its most severe challenges, as some theorists argue (Kaye & Johnson 2003), then understanding the consumption tendencies of its largest audience should help the industry stay relevant and effective given the seismic shifts wrought by the Internet. As Troland (2005: 9) states: "[Magazines] are a women's business." That is the context for this study to understand why South African women use the Internet and why they read women's magazines.

Apart from its scholarly contribution, this research could be of value to magazine publishers. Magazine teams produce titles based on their perception of readers' needs. By understanding the different uses and gratifications that readers receive from Internet and magazine use, publishers might obtain a better understanding of how to capture audiences both online and in print.

The application of UGT to Internet usage and magazine reading has mostly been studied in the United States and United Kingdom (Roy 2009). An extensive search for UGT studies in South Africa has revealed few sources, most on television viewing and none with a focus on women. This study will hopefully make a contribution to the study of UGT in the South African context.

Research questions

The purpose of this study is to examine and compare the motives of women for using the Internet and reading women's magazines. UGT is used to identify consumers' motivations for using media and to assess their attitudes towards a specific medium (Roy 2009). Based on the preceding contextual background and the literature review that follows, this study will seek to address three research questions as follows:

- *Question 1:* What are the gratification motives of South African women for using the Internet?
- *Question 2:* What are the gratification motives of South African women for reading women's magazines?
- *Question 3:* On what dimensions does Internet use provide superior gratifications compared to print magazines and vice versa?

The study is limited in scope in the following ways. Only the gratification motives and media use of women who use the Internet and who read South African women's magazines are being examined. This means that the findings cannot be generalised

to the population of female web users, nor to the South African female population. Also, while the study compares the gratification motives for both Internet and magazine use, the study does not set out to measure the potential displacement threat that the Internet poses to traditional print magazines.

Literature review

The exponential growth of the Internet has raised many questions regarding its attraction for consumers (Eighmey & McCord 1998). As the Internet has grown beyond just a new fad, and continuing use of the medium is becoming more significant (Nielsen 2009), an important question is: What motivates a consumer's continued use of the Internet?

Uses and gratifications theory (UGT)

UGT, considered to be one of the "most influential theories in media research" (Roy 2009: 878), is a useful theoretical framework from which to address the question set out above (Eighmey & McCord 1998). It attempts to explain the gratifications consumers seek in a particular medium and their perceptions of and affinity for that medium and its content (Ruggiero 2000). UGT acknowledges individual use and choice and that different people can use the same medium for different purposes (Roy 2009). It has been instrumental in understanding why consumers choose to continue their use of a specific medium (Eighmey & McCord 1998). Researchers argue that, whereas people's initial encounters with a medium might be accidental, due to curiosity about its novelty, continuing use would be highly unlikely if the medium did not provide them with specific benefits (Eighmey & McCord 1998).

According to Katz and Blumler (1973), the most frequently found motives for using traditional media (television, radio and newspapers) are *diversion* (the need to escape personal problems, and the need for emotional release); *personal relationship* (the need for companionship and help in social interaction); *personal identity* (the need for self-understanding and reassurance of one's role in society); and *surveillance* (the need for information about factors that might affect or help one). Stafford, Stafford & Schkade (2004) provided a useful meta-categorisation of gratification factors in which they identified three types of gratification sought by consumers, namely content gratifications, process gratifications and social gratifications. *Content gratifications* apply when consumers use a particular medium for the content it provides them (for example, entertainment information). *Process gratifications* apply when consumers

use a particular medium because they enjoy the process of using the medium (for example, surfing the web, control over viewing). Finally, *social gratifications* apply when consumers use a particular medium to gratify their need for social interaction (for example, friendship, interpersonal communication and keeping in touch).

Uses and gratifications for the Internet and women's magazines

Various researchers have used UGT to explain the motives for Internet usage (Roy 2009). Rafaeli (1986) investigated students' use of campus computer bulletin boards and found that entertainment and leisure were the main motives for usage. Secondary motives were to learn others' opinions of controversial issues and to communicate with other people. This study revealed that various uses and gratifications are associated with computer-mediated channels. Similarly, a study by Charney and Greenberg (2001) revealed eight gratification factors for Internet use, including 'keeping informed' (the strongest factor), 'communication' and 'diversion-entertainment' (Randle 2003).

Eighmey and McCord's (1998) study of participants' use of five commercial websites found that 'personal relevance' (a website's relevance to the user), 'entertainment value' and 'information involvement' were the main gratification factors for the users. They also identified two new factors, namely 'personal involvement' (the website's ability to project a strong sense of personality) and 'continuing relationship' (the users' desire to revisit the site because of certain features such as regularly updated information) (Eighmey & McCord 1998). Based on their results, Eighmey and McCord (1998) concluded that, although usability is an important feature for websites because of users' strong motivations for seeking information, an element of entertainment is equally important. Similar research by Lin (1999) revealed that information sites were most frequently visited by those who had high surveillance motives and that visits to online shopping sites were related to consumers' entertainment needs (Lin 1999). Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999), who also studied users of e-commerce websites, identified seven gratification factors. New among these were 'economic motivation', 'privacy' and 'transactional security' (Korgaonkar & Wolin 1999).

With the rise of social media and social networking sites, UGT research exploring motives around companionship and community has increased (Sheldon 2008). Sheldon (2008) investigated motives for and gratification from using the social network site Facebook and found that the largest proportion of students use it to cultivate friendships and maintain relationships with friends. Entertainment and passing time – motives that were associated with television and newspaper use in earlier studies – were also found to be important predictors of Facebook use (Sheldon

2008). These findings concur with those of Flaherty, Pearce & Rubin (1998), who argued that people use the Internet to seek gratifications usually obtained through traditional media such as information, entertainment and diversion.

In a study of Internet uses and gratifications in an Indian context, Roy (2009) identified six gratification motives through factor analysis. 'Wide exposure' (the Internet broadens users' outlook) and 'career opportunities' (the ease with which users can seek new career opportunities) were categorised as *content gratification* factors. 'User-friendliness' (users prefer to use the medium because it is easy to use) and 'self-development' (users' sense that the Internet boosted their creativity and allowed them to take control of their lives) were categorised as *process gratifications*. The factors 'global exchange' (chatting via the web, keeping in touch with others on the net) and 'relaxation' were categorised as *social gratifications*.

In a rare cross-cultural study, Choi, Dekkers and Park (2004) compared the differences in gratification motives for Internet use among three countries (the Netherlands, South Korea and the United States). 'Information-seeking' and 'self-improvement' were the two major factors across all three countries. 'Diversion' and 'online companionship' were strong secondary factors (Choi et al. 2004). However, the composition of the factors differed greatly for each country. For example, South Korean users differentiated between surveillance and guidance as different types of information seeking, whereas US and Dutch users did not. All three countries have a high level of broadband Internet penetration and large web populations (Choi et al. 2004). One of the reasons for the current study is to assess gratification motives for users in a country with lower Internet penetration levels.

Some researchers have tried to assess what implications users' Internet gratification motives have on the continued use of traditional media by comparing Internet gratification motives with various print media. For example, Payne, Dozier, Nomai & Yagade (2003) investigated three factors, namely social interaction, surveillances and diversion. The investigation confirmed the hypotheses that Internet use was prompted by diversion and that newspaper reading was preferred for surveillance (Payne et al. 2003). However, the hypothesis that the Internet is preferred for social interaction could not be confirmed (Payne et al. 2003).

Flavián and Guerra (2006) investigated the main motives for online rather than traditional print newspaper consumption and found a positive relationship between users' need for updated news and online news readership. In contrast, entertainment, habit and relaxation motives were closely associated with reading the print newspapers (Flavián & Guerra 2006). The study also found that users perceive the two media as different products in terms of information and entertainment value provided (Flavián & Guerra 2006). Similarly, Randle (2003) conducted a cross-

media study of consumer magazines and the Internet to determine the dimensions on which Internet use provides superior gratifications to magazine reading. Randle (2003) found that there is a wider range of Internet gratifications than magazine gratifications. In addition, Randle (2003) found that the Internet provides superior gratification for task-oriented motives (which focus on the usefulness of the media) and that magazines are preferred for affective and diversionary gratifications (which focus on the social and diversionary value of the media). Randle (2003: 4) argued that the results suggested that the Web is “a real threat” to magazines in more cognitive content and that the need for affective content may prompt magazine use.

Randle’s (2003) findings on the affective gratifications of magazine use resonate with other studies of magazine use. Stevens, McLaran and Catterall (2007) used in-depth interviews to study consumption of women’s magazine and found that magazines offer women a sense of community with “other women readers who share common experiences and interests”. This is closely linked to the social gratifications described by Stafford et al. (2004).

Women’s Internet usage

Gender plays an important role in Internet adoption (Dholakia, Dholakia & Kshetri 2003). In many countries, the number of men using the web far outweighs women. A wide range of factors, such as income levels, women’s participation in technology-related decisions, and attitudes towards computers and technology, account for the gender gap in Internet usage (Dholakia et al. 2003). However, in some developed countries, the gender gap has virtually disappeared and is even showing a reverse trend (Yang & Wu 2007).

Not much research, however, has been undertaken to investigate the relationship between gender, and motives for and gratifications obtained from Internet use (Randle 2003). Jackson, Ervin, Gardner & Schmitt (2001) investigated Internet usage and found that e-mail was used more often by women than by men and that women perceived computer technology as less important than men. Jackson et al. (2001) attribute this finding to women’s greater need for interpersonal communication. Men surfed the Internet more often than women, as they exhibited stronger motivations for information. However, no evidence could be found to indicate that men use the Internet more often. Similarly, Weiser (2000) found that while males used the Internet to gratify entertainment and leisure needs, women’s motives for Internet use revolve around interpersonal communication and education. In a study involving Australian women, Singh (2001) found that women did not see the importance of learning to use a new computer technology. Women also did not see the Internet as a

place for 'play' or entertainment. Singh (2001) concluded that when women "become comfortable with technology – as with the telephone or the PC – they see it as a tool rather than a technology" (2001: 374). Findings such as these have fuelled studies to understand the sexes' perception of computer technology (Dholakia et al. 2003). Some of these findings are also relevant to this study of women's Internet usage.

Research methodology

Those that research uses and gratifications usually follow one of two research approaches. The first approach requires no assumptions on the gratification structure and attempts to identify the gratification factors during the research (Chigona, Kamkweda & Manjoo 2008). The second approach followed by researchers such as Stafford et al. (2004), Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), Chigona et al. (2008) and Payne et al. (2003) requires the gathering of a list of possible gratifications from previous UGT studies and testing whether these gratifications apply in a different research context. As the literature reviewed here provides a rich resource of gratification factors to draw from, this study adopts the second approach to investigate whether the uses and gratification factors identified in previous studies apply to women's magazine and Internet use in the South African context. Thirty gratification statements to measure the motivations for magazine and Internet use were drawn from the literature. The statements were grouped into 10 a priori categories that capture the gratifications found in the literature as summarised in Table 1. These statements were used in the design of a 21-item survey instrument. The statements were operationalised on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = exactly, 1 = not at all) and respondents were asked to rate their reasons for using magazines and the Internet with respect to each statement.

The 21-item survey instrument was designed to capture respondents' Internet and magazine use. The instrument was a web-based survey that was published on an online research portal administered by a university. The instrument was divided into three parts: In the first part, respondents were asked to answer questions on basic demographics (gender, household income). In the second part, respondents were asked questions on their magazine use; and the final section focused on the respondents' Internet usage.

The survey was administered to 16 000 subscribers to six national women's magazines. The sample consisted of all subscribers whose e-mail addresses were captured by the subscription database for the magazines. To prevent non-response from Afrikaans-speaking respondents, the questionnaire was also translated into Afrikaans for readers of the Afrikaans magazines. An English and Afrikaans invitation

Table 1: Measurement items designed to capture Internet and magazine gratifications

Gratification measures: "I read magazines..." (Note)	
Diversioin (D): <i>"Relaxing and passing time with entertainment materials"</i> (Payne et al. 2003: 117)	
To learn about celebrities	(Randle 2003)
To pass the time when I'm bored	(Randle 2003); (Payne et al. 1988)
For entertainment; to relax	(Randle 2003); (Payne et al. 1988)
They offer stories with good illustrations and photographic content	(Randle 2003); (Payne et al. 1988)
Social escapism (SE): <i>"A relaxant to relieve day-to-day stress, and to overcome loneliness"</i> (Korgaonkar & Wolin 1999: 56)	
To escape to a fantasy world	(Korgaonkar & Wolin 1999)
Whenever I read magazines, I lose track of time and forget about my surroundings	(Novak, Hoffman & Yung 2000)
Exploration (EX): <i>Exploratory behavior associated with curiosity and desire for variety</i> (Novak, Hoffman & Yung 2000)	
I enjoy browsing through unfamiliar magazines just for the sake of variety	(Novak, Hoffman & Yung 2000); (Papacharissi & Rubin 2000)
When I hear about a new magazine, I'm eager to check it out	(Novak, Hoffman & Yung 2000)
Career opportunities (CO): <i>"Ease of seeking career and job opportunities and preparing for the global workplace"</i> (Roy 2009)	
Because they help me with career matters	(Randle 2003); (Payne et al. 1988)
Because they help me with my job	(Randle 2003); (Payne et al. 1988)
Surveillance (S): <i>"Media use aimed at obtaining information about the world"</i> (Payne et al. 2003: 117)	
Because they offer interesting stories	(Randle 2003)
Because they teach me about common issues	(Randle 2003); (Payne et al. 1988)
Because they help me keep abreast of events and trends	(Randle 2003); (Payne et al. 1988)
Because they offer influential points of view	(Papacharissi & Rubin 2000)
Economy (E): <i>"Use of media for shopping and buying motivations such as buying a stock or bond"</i> (Korgaonkar & Wolin 1999: 58)	
To make buying decisions	(Randle 2003)
Because it is affordable	(Korgaonkar & Wolin 1999)
To find information about products and services	(Randle 2003)
Information-seeking (IS) <i>"Use of media for acquiring useful information easily and in an inexpensive manner"</i> (Korgaonkar & Wolin 1999: 57)	
To get in-depth information	(Randle 2003)
To get information quickly and cheaply	(Randle 2003)
To find specific information	(Randle 2003)
Because I know the information is reliable	(Eighmey & McCord 1998)
Interpersonal utility (IU): <i>"Preparing for anticipated conversations with others or for interpersonal activities in the larger social order"</i> (Payne et al. 2003: 117)	
To organise my social life	(Sheldon 2008)
To meet people with my interests	(Randle 2003)
To find romantic relationships	(Sheldon 2008)
Because they invite me to create my own content	(Shao 2008)
Because they give me the freedom to express my opinion and feelings	(Randle 2003)
Status (SS): <i>Media use is perceived as cool and confers social identity and status</i> (Sheldon 2008)	
Because they make me appear modern/hip	(Sheldon 2008)
To gain status	(Randle 2003)
Self-development (SD): <i>"Use of media for self growth and development"</i> (Roy 2009)	
Because they inspire me to be more creative	(Roy 2009)
Because they provide me with ideas to improve my lifestyle	(Randle 2003)

Note: These statements are those used in the magazine section of the survey. The exact 30 sentences were adapted to the Internet context.

to participate were designed and e-mailed via a bulk e-mail service to the sample participants. The e-mail contained information about the researcher, the purpose of the study, sponsorship of the study as well as the URL link to the survey. Online advertisements for the survey were also designed and published on six magazine websites.

Prior to the survey, a pilot study was performed with five women who were representative of the sample. They were both women's magazine readers and web users. Three were bilingual (Afrikaans-English) and tested both the Afrikaans and English versions.

In order to increase the response rates, an opportunity to participate in a draw for a R1 500 gift certificate was offered. Various studies (for example, Brick, Montaquila, Hagedorn, Roth & Chapman 2005; Singer & Bossarte 2006) indicate that incentives increase the response rate by encouraging those already inclined to respond and therefore do not reduce non-response bias. As the size of the incentive does not necessarily cause respondents to take higher risks in survey participation (Singer & Couper 2008), it was not considered unethical to offer this incentive. Further, because of the importance of transparency in communicating incentives in web surveys (Cobanoglu & Cobanoglu 2003), all respondents were notified that they stood an equal chance of winning the gift voucher.

The data were collected during the last week of November 2009. IP addresses of the respondents were collected to reduce the likelihood of respondents participating in the survey more than once (Randle 2003).

Using the SPSS software package, principal component analysis with varimax rotation was performed on the gratification items to extract the gratification factors for each medium. The factor analysis used the Kaiser criterion that specified the retention of factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (Costello & Osborne 2005). Moreover, items for each factor had to meet the 0.40 factor loading criterion, a level often used in social sciences research (Costello & Osborne 2005). In the case of cross-loading items, where an item had a loading greater than 0.4 across more than one factor, the item was retained to the factor where it had the highest loading (Costello & Osborne 2005).

In order to understand the gratification dimensions on which the two media differed, paired sample t-tests were performed on each matching gratification item on a 95% confidence interval of the difference. Paired t-tests determine the difference between the means from two dependent samples (Lind, Marchal & Wathen 2008). Items that differed significantly had a t-statistic far greater than 1.96.

Results

Response rate

Overall, 939 responses were received. As the study focused on women’s media use, responses from male respondents and incomplete questionnaires were excluded from analysis, leaving 803 questionnaires for data analysis. As invitations were sent to 16 000 magazine subscribers, the response rate was 5%.

Descriptive statistics of the sample

The largest group of respondents was in the age group 35–44 years (30.6%, n=246). An almost equally large proportion of respondents were in the age group 45–54 (26.4%, n=212) (Table 2).

Table 2: Age profile of sample

Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
18-24	19	2.4	2.4
25-34	155	19.3	21.7
35-44	246	30.6	52.3
45-54	212	26.4	78.6
55+	171	31.3	100.0

Regarding household income, the largest group of respondents (28.9%, n=232) fell in the group with an average monthly income of R11 000 to R19 999. The second largest income group accounting for 24.3% (n=195) of the sample were in households with an average monthly income of more than R20 000 (Table 3). This means that almost 50% of the respondents fell in very high-income brackets (LSM 9-10) as defined by the All Media Products Survey (SAARF 2009).

Home and work were the two major access points for Internet use and accounted for more than 90% of the response. Home use accounted for 48.3% (n=382) and work access accounted for 48.6% (n=384) (Table 4).

Most women (29.5%, n=234) spent 30 minutes to 1 hour online per day. The second largest group (21.8%, n=173) spent less than 30 minutes on the Internet per day (Table 5).

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Table 3: Monthly household income

Monthly household income	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Up to R4 999	96	12.0	12.0
R5 000–R7 999	135	16.8	28.8
R8 000–R10 999	145	18.0	46.8
R11 000–19 999	232	28.9	75.7
R20 000+	195	24.3	100.0

Table 4: Location of internet use

Location of internet use	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Home	382	48.3	48.3
Work	384	48.6	96.9
School/University	20	2.5	99.4
Mobile phone	4	0.5	99.9
Internet café	1	0.1	100.0

Table 5: Time spent online per day

Time	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
0–30 minutes	173	21.8	21.8
30 minutes–1 hour	234	29.5	51.3
1–2 hours	162	20.4	71.7
2–3 hours	120	15.1	86.8
3–4 hours	48	6.1	92.9
4–5 hours	28	3.5	96.4
More than 5 hours	28	3.5	100.0*

* Rounded up

Six hundred and fifty-five of the respondents (81.6%) indicated that they use the Internet for e-mail and chatting. Banking was the second most popular online activity (75%, n=602). Using the Internet for work and business was also

applicable to a large part of the sample (69.6%, n=559). A larger proportion of women (56.5%; n=454) access the Internet for cooking and recipe information than for news information (52.8%, n=424). Only 43.8% (n=352) of the respondents claim to network through these sites regularly (Figure 1).

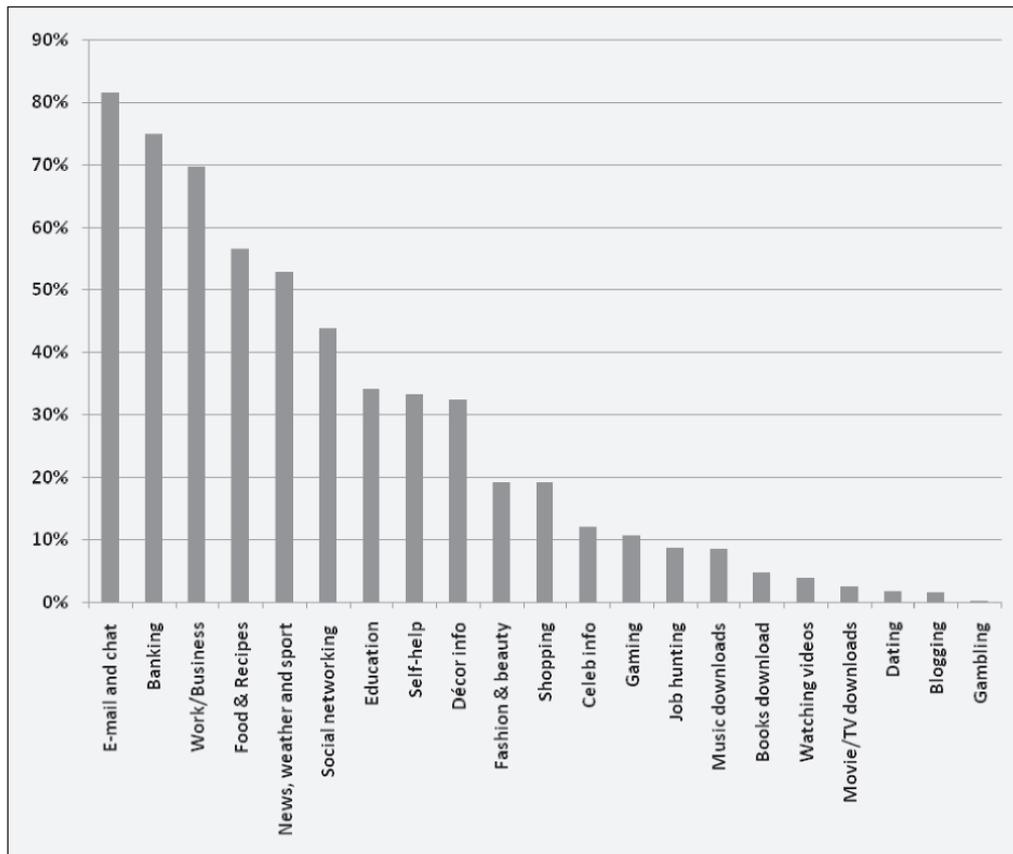


Figure 1: Uses of the Internet

Internet gratification factors

The first research question sought to determine the gratification motives of South African women for using the Internet. Using factor analysis, seven factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted. These factors accounted for 66% of the total variance. Factor items with loadings of more than 0.40 are presented in Table 6. After factor extraction, three a priori gratification categories (see Table 1), namely

Social escape (SE), Economy (E) and Status (SS), no longer appeared as distinct factors. The seven new factors are: Interpersonal utility (factor 1), Information-seeking (factor 2), Surveillance (factor 3), Self-development (factor 4), Exploration (factor 5), Diversion (factor 6) and Career opportunities (factor 7), as will be outlined. Using the meta-classification structure of gratification factors suggested by Stafford et al. (2004), these factors may be categorised as Social gratification (Interpersonal utility), Content gratification (Surveillance, Self-development, Career opportunities and Diversion) and Process gratification (Information-seeking and Exploration).

Interpersonal utility: Factor 1, with an eigenvalue of 10.50, contained seven items and accounted for 34.98% of the total variance. This was the only factor that emphasised interpersonal communication and interpersonal needs. According to this factor, the Internet is seen as a means to meet and connect with others, to share views with others and maintain relationships. In this case, it seems as if the Internet is used to provide users with a means to meet people and to share views and opinions with others. The fact that over 81% of the respondents indicated that they use the Internet for e-mail and chatting also supports the socialising and community-building capability of the Internet. Use of the Internet also relays some social status to the respondents. This factor contained both a priori items categorised under Status (SS) and retained all the a priori Interpersonal utility (IU) items. It is the strongest factor in the analysis.

Information-seeking: Factor 2, with an eigenvalue of 2.81, contained six items and accounted for 9.35% of the total variance. This factor deals with the actual process of searching for information. It is associated with the ease of use and convenience of the Internet and the credibility of information on the web. It contained all items from the Information-seeking (IS) a priori category as well as one item each from the Surveillance (S) category and the Economy (E) category. The factor Information-seeking confirms the Internet's pivotal informational role (Korgaonkar & Wolin 1999). The high usage of the Internet for banking (75%, n=602), business (69.6%, n=559) and news (52.8%, n=424) also reflects this informational role. The fact that items conveying ease of use, quick access and affordability are also included in the Information-seeking factor indicates that respondents prize these features of the web.

Surveillance: Factor 3, with an eigenvalue of 1.89, contained six items and accounted for 6.29% of the total variance. This factor is connected to the use of the Internet to keep up-to-date with current events, new information about the environment, and confirming one's worldview. The factor is characterised by items associated with the content respondents receive from online sources and reflects the respondents' need for interesting and affordable content in the online environment. It contained three

Table 6: Factor analysis of internet gratification items (without poor loading items)

Gratification items (variables)	Mean	SD	Factors and factor loadings						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy visiting unfamiliar websites just for the sake of variety (EX)*	3.77	0.998					.840		
When I hear about a new website, I'm eager to check it out (EX)	3.48	1.137					.817		
I often lose track of time and my surroundings when I'm online (SE)	3.89	1.111					.715		
To learn about celebrities (D)	2.80	1.195			.520				
Because they help me with my career (CO)	2.19	1.077							.771
They offer stories with good illustrations and photographic content (D)	3.53	1.000			.732				
Because they teach me about common issues (S)	3.91	0.874			.631				
Because they are affordable (E)	2.87	1.176			.535				
For entertainment; to relax (D)	4.35	0.764						.625	
To meet people with my interests (IU)	2.31	1.255	.592						
Because they provide me with ideas to improve my lifestyle (SD)	4.03	0.967				.728			
To escape to a fantasy world (SE)	3.00	1.378						.476	
To gain status (SS)	1.45	0.909	.754						
To get information quickly and cheaply (IS)	2.78	1.251		.511				.439	
To organise my social life (IU)	1.99	1.125	.553						
To find information about products and services (E)	3.62	1.050		.491					
Because they offer interesting stories (S)	3.88	0.978			.596				
Because they help me with my job (CO)	2.01	1.119							.772
To find specific information (IS)	2.93	1.057		.732					
Because I know the information is reliable (IS)	3.10	1.090		.790					
To get in-depth information (IS)	2.98	1.165		.850					
Because they offer influential points of view (S)	2.31	1.182		.645					
Because they give me the freedom to express my opinion and feelings (IU)	3.01	1.129	.512						
Because they help me keep abreast of events and trends (S)	3.90	0.920			.471				
To pass the time when I'm bored (D)	3.26	1.352						.721	
Because they make me appear modern/hip (SS)	1.74	1.105	.762						
To make buying decisions (E)	2.81	1.220				.547			
To find romantic relationships (IU)	1.23	0.704	.705						
Because they inspire me to be more creative (SD)	3.83	1.034				.779			
Because they invite me to create my own content (IU)	2.29	1.284	.516						
<i>Eigenvalues</i>			10.50	2.81	1.89	1.36	1.15	1.12	1.01
<i>% variance - Factor</i>			34.98	9.35	6.29	4.53	3.84	3.72	3.35
<i>% variance - Cumulative</i>			34.98	44.33	50.62	55.15	58.98	62.71	66.06
<i>Reliability (Cronbach's α)</i>			0.83	0.83	0.84	0.81	0.85	0.82	0.68

* Brackets indicate assignment of items based on a priori gratification categories.

items from the Surveillance (S) a priori category but also gained an item from the Economy (E) category and two items from the Diversion (D) a priori category. These items acknowledge the respondents' need for illustrated content and information.

Self-development: Factor 4, with an eigenvalue of 1.36, contained three items and accounted for 4.53% of the total variance. The emphasis in this factor is on respondents' creativity, development and self-growth. Using the Internet, respondents can improve themselves and their lifestyles. The factor retained all items from the Self-development (SD) a priori category but also gained an item from the Economy (E) category. The confirmation of Self-development as an interpretable factor, as defined by Roy (2009), highlights an interesting evolution of Internet usage. This is evident in the high incidence (56.5%, n=454) of users claiming to use the information for cooking, décor and self-help. This suggests the use of the Internet as a tool for finding inspirational ideas for self-improvement – a content area usually covered in women's magazines.

Exploration: Factor 5, with an eigenvalue of 1.15, contained three items and accounted for 3.84% of the total variance. This factor reflects the respondents' enjoyment of surfing the web. Moreover, it seems to suggest that exploring the web is an absorbing activity, as respondents' lose track of time and their surroundings when browsing the net. It retained all items from the Exploration (EX) a priori category and gained an item from the Social escapism (SE) category.

Diversion: Factor 6, with an eigenvalue of 1.12, contained three items and accounted for 3.72% of the total variance. The factor is concerned with relaxation, leisure and entertainment. It also reflects respondents' need to disconnect or escape from the real world. It contained two items from the Diversion (D) category and one from the Social escapism (SE) a priori category.

Career opportunities: Factor 7, with an eigenvalue of 1.01, contained only two items and accounted for 3.35% of the total variance. It is the final factor and is associated with respondents' use of the Internet for work and career purposes. It retained both items in the Career opportunities (CO) a priori category and gained no other items.

Four of the seven factors (Interpersonal utility, Information-seeking, Diversion and Surveillance) are recurring motives for Internet use throughout the literature. These results for Internet motivations are therefore consistent with the findings of previous studies (for example, Korgaonkar & Wolin 1999; Stafford et al. 2004; Roy 2009). Two of the factors (Information-seeking and Interpersonal utility) emphasise the functional use of the Internet, in support of Papacharissi and Rubin's (2000) description of Internet use as purposeful and selective. In Papacharissi and Rubin's study (2000), the Interpersonal utility factor was the most important Internet

gratification factor. Similarly, in this study, Interpersonal utility was also the most salient factor, with a greater focus on the social aspect of the Internet.

The use of the Internet for entertainment purposes by this group of users does not seem to rank high. The fact that less than 10% of respondents indicated that they use the Internet for purposes such as music downloads, watching videos and gaming also points towards this lack of interest in the Internet as a major entertainment medium. In this context, Diversion is definitely a more apt description for Internet use, as it seems to be more of a distraction or pastime than a major source of entertainment. In fact, Payne et al. (2003: 123) suggest that future researchers should use experimental designs to ascertain whether the “Internet’s apparent capacity to meet diversionary needs is simply a by-product of time spent on the Internet, or whether time spent is motivated by expectations that the Internet will be responsive to the need”.

Considering the wide variety of Internet technologies that allow for different web applications, it is surprising that the Internet did not have a much more extensive gratification structure than magazines.

Magazine gratification factors

The second research question sought to determine the gratification factors of magazine use. Factor analysis (Table 7) resulted in six factors (accounting for 58.6% of the total variance) with eigenvalues greater than one being extracted. The most salient factor was Surveillance, followed by Status, Diversion, Career opportunities, Self-development and Exploration. This is a much wider gratification structure than the three factors (Surveillance, Diversion and Social interaction) found by Payne et al. (1988). Using the meta-classification structure (Stafford et al. 2004), the factors may be categorised as Social gratification (Status), Content gratification (Surveillance, Self-development, Career opportunities and Diversion) and Process gratification (Exploration).

Information-seeking: Factor 1, with an eigenvalue of 9.88, contained 11 items. It was the strongest factor and accounted for 32.93% of the variance. It retained all items from the Information-seeking (IS) and gained three items from the Surveillance (S) a priori categories, two from the Economy (E) category, and one from the Interpersonal utility category. In the magazine factor analysis, Surveillance (S) has been subsumed by Information-seeking (IS), whereas these two factors were separated in the Internet analysis.

Status: Factor 2, with an eigenvalue of 2.29, contained five items and accounted for 7.64% of the total variance. It retained both Status (SS) items and gained two items

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Table 7: Factor analysis of internet gratification items (without poor loading items)

Gratification items (variables)	Mean	SD	Factor loadings					
			1	2	3	4	5	6
I enjoy browsing through unfamiliar magazines just for the sake of variety (EX)*	2.61	1.261						.850
When I hear about a new magazine, I'm eager to check it out (EX)	2.67	1.329						.811
Whenever I read magazines, I lose track of time and forget about my surroundings (SE)	2.72	1.331				.415		
To learn about celebrities (D)	1.68	1.032			.434			
Because they help me with career matters (CO)	2.07	1.236				.572		
They offer interesting stories with good illustrations and photographic content (D)	2.53	1.259	.440		.406			
Because they teach me about common issues (S)	3.05	1.156	.584					
Because they are affordable (E)	3.13	1.289	.415					
For entertainment; to relax (D)	2.90	1.341			.685			
To meet people with my interests (IU)	1.53	0.970				.525		
Because they provide me with ideas to improve my lifestyle (SD)	2.89	1.276					.643	
To escape to a fantasy world (SE)	2.07	1.366			.518			
To gain status (SS)	1.26	0.724		.793				
To get information quickly and cheaply (IS)	3.68	1.189	.565					
To organise my social life (IU)	1.78	1.115		.663				
To find information about products and services (E)	3.71	1.093	.614					
Because they offer interesting stories (S)	2.77	1.273			.515			
Because they help me with my job (CO)	2.86	1.449				.489		
To find specific information (IS)	4.20	0.886	.642					
Because I know the information is reliable (IS)	3.42	1.036	.749					
To get in-depth information (IS)	3.66	1.065	.750					
Because they give me the freedom to express my opinions and feelings (IU)	3.01	1.129	.514					
Because they help me keep abreast of events and trends (S)	2.16	1.197	.584					
To pass the time when I'm bored (D)	3.31	1.197			.556			
Because they make me appear modern/hip (SS)	2.60	1.413		.756				
To make buying decisions (E)	1.40	0.906		.505				
To find romantic relationships (IU)	2.59	1.321		.690				
Because they offer influential points of view (S)	1.16	0.587	.697					
Because they inspire me to be more creative (SD)	2.92	1.371					.745	
Because they invite me to create my own content (IU)	1.90	1.185						
<i>Eigenvalues</i>			9.88	2.29	1.60	1.43	1.26	1.13
<i>% variance - Factor</i>			32.92	7.64	5.33	4.78	4.21	3.76
<i>% variance - Cumulative</i>			32.92	40.56	45.89	50.66	54.87	58.63
<i>Reliability (Cronbach α)</i>			0.89	0.80	0.63	0.67	0.74	0.76

* Brackets indicate assignment of items based on a priori gratification categories.

from the Interpersonal utility (IU) a priori category and one item from the Economy (E) a priori category. This factor seems to be more associated with improving one's position in social circles, shopping and finding romance.

Diversion: Factor 3, with an eigenvalue of 1.60, contained five items and accounted for 5.33% of the total variance. It retained three of the four items from the Diversion (D) a priori category and gained two items from the Surveillance (S) and Social escapism (S) categories. This factor suggests that respondents sought entertainment but also some elements of social escapism and surveillance in a magazine context.

Career opportunities: Factor 4, with an eigenvalue of 1.26, accounted for 4.21% of the total variance and contained four items: two from Career opportunities (CO) and one each from Interpersonal utility (IU) and Social escapism (SE). The fact that Career opportunities emerged as a salient factor is somewhat surprising given that not much content in women's magazines is dedicated to careers. The inclusion of the SE item and IU item could suggest that respondents view specific magazine content as a networking tool to further their careers or as an effective stress reliever. In the findings of Payne et al. (1988), these two items were found in the surveillance grouping in the magazine context. Therefore, it is more likely that the lower Cronbach's alpha (0.67) and the lower item communalities point to a weaker factor construct.

Self-development: Factor 5, with an eigenvalue of 1.26, accounted for 4.21% of the total variance and retained the two a priori Self-development (SD) items, suggesting that respondents see magazines as a strong fillip to their creativity, and an inspiration to do something new or change or enhance their lives.

Exploration: Finally, Factor 6, with an eigenvalue of 1.13, accounted for 3.76% of the total variance and retained the two items from the a priori Exploration (EX) category. This factor suggests that despite magazines being a traditional media form, respondents still enjoy discovering new magazines.

The respondents agreed strongly with statements describing the rich content (in-depth, interesting stories) of magazines. Magazines are not only used to keep up to date with trends and lifestyle issues, but they also appear to be important shopping tools. Magazines are seen as credible sources of information. The strong responses on magazine reading as an entertaining diversion indicate that magazine use is still a prime source of leisure for women. Moreover, despite the overcrowded newsstands, these women still enjoy discovering new magazines. Given the nature of women's magazine content – much of which focuses on 'transformation', self-improvement, trends and escape – it is not surprising that Self-development and Status were identified as salient factors.

Comparison of gratification dimensions between Internet use and magazine use

The third research question sought to identify the dimensions on which Internet use provided superior gratification in comparison with magazine use and vice versa. In line with the approaches adopted by Randle (2003) and Payne et al. (1988), paired sample t-tests were performed on the means of each gratification item. Paired items with a t-statistics greater than 1.96 are significant and highlighted in bold in Table 8. If the Internet provides superior gratification, the t-stat figure is negative. The results of the t-tests indicate that the two media differ significantly on 22 of the 30 gratification items.

Based on the results for the sample, and similar to Randle's (2003) study, Internet use provides superior gratifications on fewer dimensions than magazine use. The Internet offers superior gratifications on six dimensions identified in the literature, namely the dimensions labelled A–F in Table 8, while magazines offer superior gratifications on the 16 dimensions labelled G–V in Table 8.

The Internet is only superior in process gratifications (quick, easy access to information, affordable/free content). Several reasons could be advanced to explain why this is the case. Literature on gender differences and computer use (Dholakia et al. 2003) indicates that women obtain far less enjoyment from using computer technologies. Women's Internet use is therefore more likely to revolve around the functional role of the technology. The limited time spent on the Internet (50.3% spent of respondents spent less than one hour per day on the Internet) also points towards this fact. Moreover, various factors influence Internet use and access. Bandwidth and speed of Internet connection, Internet access rates and computer skills all play a role (Stafford et al. 2004) in obtaining gratification from the web. In addition, Payne et al. (2003) found that computer ownership plays a pivotal role in gratifications sought and obtained from Internet use. Furthermore, the Internet is still considered a new technology, especially in South Africa (Chigona et al. 2008) and according to Chigona et al. (2008), process gratifications have always been important motives for using new technologies such as the Internet.

Magazines provide superior gratifications on all three of the meta-categories of gratification factors (namely, content gratification, process gratification and social gratification) identified by Stafford et al. (2004), but content gratifications (for example, Diversion, Social escapism, Surveillance and Self-development) predominate, followed by process gratifications and social gratifications. The fact that qualitative studies have shown that women describe their magazine reading as 'affective' (Randle 2003), 'ritualistic' and 'experiential' (Stevens et al. 2007) indicates that magazine consumption provides meaningful gratification. One reasonable

Table 8: Paired t-tests

Items (Magazines-Internet)	Paired differences					t values	d.f.	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	SD	Std error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Because they give me the freedom to express my opinions and feelings	0.14	1.12	0.04	0.06	0.22	3.42	736	0.001
Because they help me keep abreast of events and trends (1) (G)	0.59	1.21	0.05	0.50	0.68	13.17	735	0.000
To pass the time when I'm bored (1) (H)	0.66	1.42	0.05	0.56	0.77	12.73	735	0.000
Because they make me appear hip/modern (1) (I)	0.31	0.09	0.03	0.25	0.38	9.59	735	0.000
To make buying decisions	0.22	1.27	0.05	0.13	0.31	4.73	735	0.000
To find romantic relationships	0.07	0.66	0.02	0.02	0.12	2.72	735	0.007
Because they offer influential points of view	0.04	1.15	0.04	-0.04	0.13	1.03	736	0.304
Because they inspire me to be more creative (1) (J)	0.91	1.19	0.04	0.83	1.00	20.86	735	0.000
Because they invite me to create my own content (1) (K)	0.38	1.17	0.04	0.29	0.46	8.78	735	0.000
I enjoy browsing unfamiliar magazines / websites just for the sake of variety (1) (L)	1.17	1.43	0.05	1.06	1.27	22.59	771	0.000
When I hear about a new magazine, I'm eager to check it out (1) (M)	0.82	1.46	0.05	0.71	0.92	15.51	771	0.000
I often lose track of time and my surroundings when I'm reading magazines (1) (N)	1.17	1.53	0.06	1.06	1.28	21.17	771	0.000
To learn about celebrities (1) (O)	1.12	1.12	0.04	1.04	1.20	27.35	748	0.000
Because they help me with career matters	0.11	1.25	0.05	0.02	0.20	2.36	748	0.018
Because they offer stories with good illustrations and photographic content (1) (P)	0.99	1.28	0.05	0.90	1.09	21.19	748	0.000
Because they teach me about common issues (1) (Q)	0.85	1.24	0.05	0.76	0.94	18.69	748	0.000
Because it is affordable (2) (A)	0.25	1.50	0.06	-0.36	-0.15	-4.61	748	0.000
For entertainment; to relax (1) (R)	1.48	1.41	0.05	1.38	1.58	28.58	747	0.000
To meet people with my interests (1) (S)	0.78	1.29	0.05	0.68	0.87	16.42	747	0.000
Because they provide me with ideas to improve my lifestyle (1) (T)	1.13	1.23	0.05	1.04	1.22	25.12	747	0.000
To escape to a fantasy world (1) (U)	0.93	1.30	0.05	0.83	1.02	19.47	746	0.000
To gain status	0.19	0.76	0.03	0.13	0.24	6.66	746	0.000
To get information quickly and cheaply (2) (B)	-0.90	1.57	0.06	-1.01	-0.79	-15.69	746	0.000
To organise my social life	0.22	1.19	0.04	0.13	0.30	4.94	744	0.000
To find information about products and services	-0.09	1.27	0.05	-0.18	0.01	-1.82	744	0.069
Because they offer interesting stories (1) (V)	1.11	1.29	0.05	1.02	1.21	23.60	744	0.000
Because they help me with my job (2) (C)	-0.84	1.53	0.06	-0.95	-0.73	-15.08	744	0.000
To find specific information (2) (D)	-1.29	1.28	0.05	-1.38	-1.19	-27.37	736	0.000
Because I know the information is reliable (2) (E)	-0.33	1.24	0.05	-0.42	-0.24	-7.33	736	0.000
To get in-depth information (2) (F)	-0.71	1.40	0.05	-0.81	-0.61	-13.83	736	0.000

(1) Superior gratifications obtained from magazines

(2) Superior gratifications obtained from the Internet

inference as to why magazines were found to provide superior gratification in these areas could be that most of the respondents were loyal readers (in that they were subscribers) whose continual magazine use might have produced a sense of community. As Stevens et al. (2007) point out: “Women’s magazines enable women readers to enter a community of other women readers who share common experiences and interests.”

Conclusion and implications

The purpose of this study was to investigate and compare Internet use with magazine use in the South African context using the uses and gratifications framework. In general, the motivations for Internet and magazine use identified in this study are consistent with those identified in previous UGT studies. The magazines – queens of the newsstands – still reign as primary mechanisms for diversion and for keeping up to date with the goings-on in the world. Magazine readers continue to be enthralled by new magazines. It seems that the reading habits of women are firmly entrenched and it would be logical for magazine publishers to continue to employ strategies that will protect their print business.

However, the Internet, it seems, is the preferred medium for information gathering. The ease with which users can search through vast amounts of information in order to retrieve useful information is paramount to its appeal. Publishers can be guided by this process (or functional) gratification and ensure that magazines have user-friendly archives and search tools that allow for quick and effective information searches (Roy 2009). Moreover, the finding of this study that the Internet meets more needs than just users’ informational desires should be taken into consideration. The fact that the Internet satisfies the self-development and creativity needs of users should be of concern to women’s magazines that have been instrumental in providing a fillip to such needs. The managers of women’s magazines that provide rich content in these areas could design web offerings that offer advice, expert answers and instructional how-to content.

The findings of this study suggest that the fear of the Internet supplanting print magazines could be premature. The Internet gratification factors seem to suggest that the Internet may not be a threat to magazines but rather a complementary medium. Generally, the two media seem to gratify different motivations, and using a magazine website to drive print readership and vice versa could only strengthen magazine brands (Ellonen & Kuivalainen 2008). Some recent studies (Ellonen & Kuivalainen 2008) suggest that although magazine websites might remain cost centres, building an online presence can help strengthen the publication.

Though this study's scope was limited to women who read women's magazines, a number of men answered the questionnaires (which were excluded from analysis). This might indicate that a women's magazine website has broader reach and appeal. A future study that investigates uses and gratifications from a gender perspective would therefore be useful, especially considering the lack of literature on Internet uses and gratifications and gender (Roy 2009). Research indicates that there is a gender gap in Internet use (Dholakia et al. 2003), and consumer reports indicate that men are spending less time on magazines and more on the Internet (Fine 2005). Given this, a study from a gender perspective might not only compare men's and women's uses and gratifications for Internet and magazines, but also relate gratification factors to time spent online and time spent reading magazines.

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