Eudaimonia, Hedonia, and Fan Behavior: Examining the Motives of Fans of Fictional Texts

Laramie D. Taylor

University of California Davis

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Author note.

Laramie D. Taylor, Department of Communication, University of California Davis. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Laramie D. Taylor, Department of Communication, UC Davis, Davis, CA 95616. E-mail: lartaylor@ucdavis.edu.
Abstract

Fans of fictional texts engage with the texts of which they are fans in ways that are powerful and complex. What motivates fans to attend to their preferred texts, however, is as yet unclear. In a survey of U.S. adults, participants answered questions about their fan behaviors, the degree to which they identify as fans, and the motives that drive their attention to their preferred texts. Results indicate that fans are motivated by both hedonic and eudaimonic motives, and that stronger motives are associated with stronger fan identification. In addition, both types of motive are associated with engaging in fan behaviors characterized by involvement with the text. Eudaimonic motives are also associated with more fan community engagement, but hedonic motives are only associated with that involvement in concert with fan identification.

Keywords: fans, fandom, media involvement, eudaimonia
Eudaimonia, Hedonia, and Fan Behavior: Examining the Motives of Fans of Fictional Texts

Fans of fictional texts often engage with the texts of which they are fans in powerful ways (Jenkins, 1992). A fan of a fictional narrative is here defined as an individual for whom a positive relationship with a fictional text (or body of texts) is part of their identity or self-concept (Taylor, 2015); a fan is someone who thinks of her- or himself as a fan. Although recent empirical research has undertaken to describe fans and fan behavior (Dill-Shackelford, Hopper-Losenicky, Vinney, Swain, & Hogg, 2015; Taylor, 2015; Tsay-Vogel & Sanders, 2017), relatively little attention has been devoted to understanding what motivates attention to that text, either before the audience member becomes a fan or after. In the present study, the roles of seeking hedonic and eudaimonic experiences with fan texts are examined. Hedonic experiences with entertainment media are those focused on simple positive affect--on experiencing excitement, humor, or pleasure; eudaimonic experiences with entertainment media are those focused on meaning-making or profundity--on understanding the human condition, achieving insights into the self, or reflecting on the purpose of life (Oliver & Raney, 2011).

The goal of the present study is to examine the role that eudaimonic and hedonic motives play for fans of fictional narratives, specifically how each type of motive relates to the strength of fan identification and the nature of fan behavior.

**Selecting and Attending to Texts**

People are motivated to select, attend to, and engage with media texts featuring narratives for a wide variety of reasons, some conscious and deliberative (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973) and others relatively non-conscious and automatic (Zillmann & Bryant, 1985). Some motives are organized around the utility of the message for subsequent actions, behaviors, or
outcomes, such as learning health information (Lee & Taylor, 2014), strengthening close personal relationships (Greenwood & Long, 2015), or facilitating future social interactions (Suess et al., 1998; Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2011). Many motives for viewing, however, are focused on the experience itself, expressed as seeking entertainment, enjoyment, and distraction (Rubin, 1979, 1983). In fact, even when other motives are present, the desire for a particular kind of experience with the content likely shape media choices (see Lee & Taylor, 2014).

Recent conceptualizations of entertainment motives and experiences include two distinct types of experience—hedonic and eudaimonic. Hedonic motives for consuming entertainment media involve seeking (and anticipating) a positive affective response to the entertainment content, often characterized as amusement, enjoyment, or fun (Oliver & Bartsch, 2011). Examples of hedonic experiences might be reading the latest Star Wars novelization for the rush of excitement or watching a favorite episode of a situation comedy to laugh at the ridiculous characters. Eudaimonic motives for consuming entertainment media involve seeking meaningful experiences, characterized as appreciation (Oliver & Bartsch, 2011; Oliver & Raney, 2011) or elevation (Janicke & Oliver, 2017). Whereas hedonic experiences mean feeling good during viewing, eudaimonic experiences mean connecting with or gaining insight into fundamental questions of virtue, human nature, and the purpose of existence (Oliver & Bartsch, 2011). An example of a eudaimonic experience with a narrative might be watching a drama and identifying with a morally ambiguous character, and thereby gaining insights into the complexity of the human experience.

Importantly, although conceptually distinct, hedonic and eudaimonic motives (and, indeed, experiences) are not mutually exclusive. At least one study has found the experiences to
be significantly and positively correlated (Reiger, Reinecke, Frischlich, & Bente, 2014), and experiencing positive affect in response to a favorite film has been found to be associated with eudaimonic viewing motives for film selection generally (Oliver & Raney, 2011).

Although past research has documented the existence and importance of these two classes of motive for attention to entertainment texts generally, their importance for fans of fictional narratives remains largely unexplored. In fact, relatively little quantitative research has examined fans of fictional texts generally. Survey research in this area has tended to differentiate between fanship, the individual-level identification as a fan of a text, and fandom, which refers to engagement with the community of fans of a text or class of texts (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010; Taylor, 2015; Tsay-Vogel & Sanders, 2017). Behaviorally, fanship is expressed as engagement with the text, such as repeated viewing, reading fan fiction, or purchasing merchandise related to the text; participation in fandom takes the form of engaging with other fans, most commonly by discussing texts in person or online and less commonly through participation in fan clubs or groups or through sharing creative extensions or interpretations of texts, as through cosplay or the production and sharing of fan fiction or art (Taylor, 2015). More fans report engaging with texts than engaging with fandom (Taylor, 2015).

Two studies have explored, in some way, the function of eudaimonic and hedonic motives among fans. Tsay-Vogel and Sanders (2017) surveyed Harry Potter fans shortly before the final installment of the 8 initial Harry Potter movies was released. In their sample, fans with stronger eudaimonic motives were more likely to report participating in Harry Potter fandom through behavior like talking with and helping other Harry Potter fans (Tsay-Vogel & Sanders, 2017). This link, Tsay-Vogel and Sanders (2017) argued, arises as individuals with a tendency to seek meaning in entertainment texts (i.e., those with eudaimonic motives) also strive to seek
meaning through the relatively more involved, demanding, and social interactions of fan communities. If this explanation is accurate, then the link is driven by a shared cause—some underlying set of factors that motive meaning-seeking in both entertainment texts and through social interaction organized around those texts. Importantly, the items in Tsay-Vogel and Sanders’ measure of fandom did not specify the character of the interaction with the fan community--fandom was measured as social engagement with other Harry Potter fans (e.g., “My friends in the Harry Potter fanbase are part of my everyday activities,” and “I contact fellow fans often”), not engagement about or related to Harry Potter texts specifically. Arguably, then, their findings indicate a relationship between eudaimonic motives for attending to entertainment texts and a tendency to seek community through shared interest in a fictional narrative or to have friends who share an interest in the same text rather than a tendency to engage in fandom as a fan.

One other study identified a link between strength of fan identity and eudaimonic experiences during the viewing of fan texts. Vinney (2016) showed self-identified fans of Buffy, the Vampire Slayer vignettes from the television series after measuring personal fan identity. Fans for whom fan identity was more salient reported more eudaimonic experiences during viewing. This largely speaks of the influence of identifying as a fan, however, rather than the motivations that drive fan attention to texts; inasmuch as identifying as a fan reflects a strong connection to the text, to the point that one’s mental representation of one’s self includes a relationship with that text, meaningful content within the text seems more likely to evoke a meaningful (i.e. eudaimonic) response from more strongly identified fans.

The question of the viewing motives associated with individual identification as a fan, as well as text-based fan behavior, remain to be answered. There are reasons to expect that
eudaimonic motives will be associated with strength of fan identification. After all, eudaimonic motives are associated with greater reflectiveness and intellectualism (Oliver & Raney, 2011), traits that could facilitate the relatively more intense involvement with text typical of fans of fictional texts. This would be consistent with the reasoning applied by Tsay-Vogel and Sanders (2017); specifically, it suggests that there may be some set of factors that shape both the motives for fan engagement with text and the kind of involvement characteristic of being a fan.

Other mechanisms may also link eudaimonia and strength of fan identification. Self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) argues that people understand their own motives, attitudes, and preferences by examining their own actions and words and determining the motives, attitudes, or preferences that are most consistent with those actions and words. In the case of fans, self-perception theory implies that having identified as a fan of a text, an individual will begin to perceive the text, or her or his interactions with it, to be more meaningful or elevating. Alternately, the sort of repeated or careful viewing of texts typical of fans (Taylor, 2015) may simply provide greater opportunity for gaining insight from those texts.

H1a: Eudaimonic motives for viewing fan texts will be associated with strength of identification as a fan.

Importantly, consistent with Tsay-Vogel and Sanders (2017), eudaimonic motives are also likely associated with both text-based fan behavior and fandom-based fan behavior. The link with text-based fan behavior is straightforward: stronger motives to attend to a text are likely to be associated with more attention to the text. The link between eudaimonic motives and fandom-based fan behavior is more complex. Tsay-Vogel and Sanders (2017) hypothesize that both community engagement and meaning-seeking share an underlying cause, which is possible. Another possibility is that engaging with fan communities around fan texts is another means to
seek meaning in texts. In sharing ideas, interpretations, and powerful feelings with similarly-interested, engaged, informed others, eudaimonically-motivated fans of fictional narratives may be seeking additional meaningful experiences or to reinforce and validate the meaningful experiences they have already had with the text of which they are a fan. It is therefore hypothesized that:

H1b&c: Eudaimonic motives for viewing fan texts will be associated with relatively more b) text-based and c) fandom-based fan behavior.

In addition, it is likely that hedonic motives are also linked to fan identity and text-based behavior. The same reasoning based on self-perception theory that predicted eudaimonic motives could be applied to hedonic motives--a fan who chooses to view a text frequently for whatever reason is likely to infer a connection to that text, including identification as a fan. Even absent attention, frequent or strong desire to attend to a text is likely to be interpreted as evidence of strength of fan identification. Therefore:

H2a: Hedonic motives for viewing fan texts will be associated with strength of fan identification.

Stronger motives for attending to fan texts are almost inevitably likely to result in increased text-based fan behavior. Fan behaviors consist, for the most part, of careful, repeated, or expanded attention to the text; this may take the form of repeated viewing or reading of those texts, or of reading material that complements the text, such as fan theories, compendia, and so on (Taylor, 2015). For any such behavior, the fulfillment of the motive to attend to the text is attention to the text and text-related material. In addition, past research has shown an association between strength of fan identity and text-based fan behavior (Taylor, 2015). Therefore:
H2b: Hedonic motives for viewing fan texts will be associated with text-based fan behavior.

It is also possible, however, that the function of both eudaimonic and hedonic motives in predicting fan behavior will vary with strength of fan identification. Indeed, past research has identified strength of fan identification as the primary determinant of engagement in fan behavior of all kinds (Taylor, 2015). Seeking meaning from fan texts may motivate only relatively highly-identified fans to engage in fandom behaviors, for example. The likely nature of any such interaction, however, is unclear. Therefore, the question is posed:

RQ1: How do viewing motives and strength of fan identification interact to influence fan behavior?

Methods

Participants

Participants were recruited through Amazon.com’s mTurk, a crowdsourcing labor market. Only participants who had successfully completed at least 100 tasks and who had a successful completion rate of 95% or more were allowed to participate in order to reduce the frequency of respondents who ‘game’ the system. Individuals responding to the recruitment message on mTurk were directed to a survey hosted on Qualtrics. A total of 401 participants were recruited and completed the survey. Of these, 360 participants indicated that they were fans and completed fan measures; these comprised the sample for all analyses in the present study.

Of the 360 participants who self-identified as fans, 193 (53.6%) were women. Participants had a mean age of 37.07 (SD = 12.46) (range 18 - 79 years old). Most participants reported identifying primarily as White (n = 263, 73.1%), though others identified as African-American or Black (n = 27, 7.5%), Asian or Asian-American (n = 27, 7.5%), Latino or Hispanic
(n = 24, 6.7%), multi-racial or multi-ethnic (n = 12, 3.3%) or Native American (n = 6, 1.7%).

Median household income was between US $35,000 and $49,999, and median education level was a two-year college degree.

Measures

Fan identity. Fan-related measures were drawn principally from existing research on fan identity among fans of fictional texts (Taylor, 2015). Participants were first asked to indicate whether they were fans of any series, such as a television program or a series of movies, novels, or other entertainment media, and if so, what the series was. In cases of multiple texts, fans were asked to indicate their favorite series. Strength of fan identity was then measured for each participant who had indicated being a fan by asking, “How important is being a fan of your favorite series to your identity, that is, to the way you think about who you are?” Participants responded on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all important, 5 = extremely important). Results reflected an average level of identification somewhere between “slightly important” and “somewhat important” (M = 2.45, SD = 1.18).

Fan behavior. Fan behavior was measured using a list of 12 fan behaviors derived from Taylor (2015) (see Table 1 for list of behaviors). Participants were asked to indicate in which of the behaviors they had engaged relative to their favorite series in the 5 year span preceding the survey. The list included behaviors that were principally oriented on the text object of fanship (e.g., repeated reading or viewing, reading or looking at web sites related to the series, purchasing DVDs or books related to their favorite series) and others that were principally oriented on participation with a fan community or fandom (e.g., attended a meeting of a fan club, engaged in cosplay). Each respondent’s total number of behaviors in each category were tallied,
creating a measure of text-oriented fan behavior ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.71$) and fandom-oriented fan behavior ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.79$), collectively reflecting $5.68$ ($SD = 1.70$) behaviors.

**Motives.** Motives for viewing were assessed using an adapted version of Oliver and Raney’s (2011) measure of eudaimonic and hedonic motives for media use. Participants responded to 12 statements about their perceptions of and interest in their favorite series, six associated with hedonic motives (e.g., “My favorite series is enjoyable because it is fun,” “My favorite series is my favorite because it makes me laugh”) and six associated with eudaimonic motives (e.g., “My favorite series makes me think,” “I like my favorite series because it has profound meanings or messages to convey”). Participants indicated their agreement or disagreement with each statement on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted in order to confirm the received factor structure. The initial model was found to be a poor fit; even when error terms across items within each factor were correlated, an acceptable level of fit was not achieved. Examination of the modification indices suggested this was due to correlations between one item associated with hedonic motives, specifically “My favorite series is entertaining,” and nearly all other items dealing with both hedonic and eudaimonic motives. This is not an unexpected outcome, given that the model that differentiates between these motives (and their associated experiences with media content) is sometimes referred to as a “2-factor model of entertainment” (Rieger et al., 2014, p. 456; see also Oliver & Raney, 2011). This conceptualization underscores the complex character of entertainment; states of both hedonic enjoyment and meaningful appreciation might be experienced or interpreted as entertainment. When this item was dropped and select error terms associated with each factor were correlated based on modification indices, acceptable fit was achieved (CFI = .99, RMSEA = .039) (for a discussion of cut-off points for acceptable
model fit, see Hu & Bentler, 1999; Lei & Wu, 2007). Responses to each group of statements were averaged, creating one score reflective of hedonic motives (M = 4.65, SD = 1.20) and one reflective of eudaimonic motives (M = 4.93, SD = 1.22).

Prior to analysis, all measures were checked for skewness. In order to achieve acceptably low levels of skewness, several transformations were undertaken. Fan identity, initially positively skewed, was corrected through a logarithmic transformation. Eudaimonic motives were initially negatively skewed; a reflected logarithmic transformation was followed by reverse-coding so that, in the resulting score, higher scores still reflected stronger eudaimonic motives.

**Results**

Participants in the study reported being fans of a range of content. Science fiction and fantasy series were the most common (70.8%), followed by other dramatic series (19.1%) and comedies (7.9%). The single most common text was *The Walking Dead* (n = 51, 14.2%), followed by *Harry Potter* (n = 40, 11.1%), *Game of Thrones* (n = 37, 10.3%), and *Star Wars* (n = 31, 8.6%). Many series were identified by only a single participant; these tended to be situation comedies, such as *Friends, Seinfeld, Modern Family,* or *Veep*; or dramas, such as *Sons of Anarchy, The Wire,* or *The Fast and the Furious.* The series of which most participants reported being fans are best characterized as transmedia texts, with content produced across multiple media (e.g., *The Walking Dead* television series and comic books, *Harry Potter* books and films) (n = 241, 66%). The next most common were fans of television series (n = 114, 31.2%). A few participants were fans of texts that were essentially solely movies or books.

Initially, bivariate correlations were calculated among all substantive study variables. Each was found to be significantly correlated with each other (see Table 2).
In order to examine the character of the relationship between viewing motives and strength of fan identity (H1a and H2a), a regression analysis was conducted. Fan identification was regressed on hedonic and eudaimonic motives after controlling for age, sex, income, and education. Results indicated a positive association between each of the two types of motive and strength of fan identification (see Table 3), supporting H1a and H2a.

A subsequent pair of regression analyses were undertaken to examine the role of hedonic and eudaimonic motives in predicting different types of fan behavior. Analyses were conducted in two stages. First, in both analyses, controls, hedonic and eudaimonic motives, and strength of fan identification, were entered as predictors of fan behavior. Next, the interaction between hedonic motives and fan identification and the interaction between eudaimonic motives and fan identification were entered as predictors (see Table 4).

In the regression predicting text-based fan behavior, the addition of the interaction terms did not account for significantly more variance ($\Delta R^2 = .002, F(2, 350) = .49, p = .61$), so the model without the interactions was retained. Both hedonic and eudaimonic motives were associated with text-based fan behavior, as was strength of fan identity. H1b and H2b were therefore supported.

In the regression predicting fandom-based fan behavior, on the other hand, the addition of the interaction terms resulted in significantly more explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .019, F(2, 350) = 4.51, p < .05$). After the inclusion of the interaction terms, eudaimonic motives remained significantly, positively, and independently associated with fandom-based fan behavior, though hedonic motives were not. The interaction between fan identity and hedonic motives was significantly and positively associated with fandom-based fan behavior. As a follow-up, the association between eudaimonic and hedonic motives and specific fan behaviors was examined
Specific fandom-based fan behaviors associated with eudaimonic motives included talking about texts with others, discussing fan texts online, and posting about fan texts on social media.

In order to provide additional insight into the relationship among the study variables, two-step cluster analysis was also employed. Past research has employed cluster analysis to identify groups of media consumers who shared motivations or other characteristics (Jih & Lee, 2003; Kaye & Johnson, 2011). Therefore, in order to identify fans that shared similar motivational ‘profiles’, the cluster analysis was performed using all 12 items from the measure of hedonic and eudaimonic motives.

Three clusters emerged. In order to describe the clusters, a comparison was made of the eudaimonic and hedonic motives of participants in each cluster (see Table 5). Cluster one was moderate in strength of hedonic motives, but low in strength of eudaimonic motives; it was therefore labelled the hedonic cluster. Cluster two, the largest of the three clusters, was high in strength of both hedonic and eudaimonic motives, and was labelled the highly motivated cluster. Cluster three was high in strength of eudaimonic motives, but relatively low in strength of hedonic motives and was labelled the eudaimonic cluster.

ANOVA were employed to examine whether the clusters differed by fan identification and fan behavior, with post-hoc comparisons conducted using the Scheffe method to adjust for multiple comparisons (see Table 5). For each of the three variables examined, fan identification, text-based fan behavior, and fandom-based fan behavior, fans in the highly-motivated cluster scored significantly higher than fans in either other cluster. Fans in the hedonic cluster and eudaimonic cluster did not significantly differ.

Discussion
In a survey of self-identified fans of fictional texts, relationships among the motives that drive fan attention to their preferred texts, the strength of their identification as fans of those texts, and their fan behaviors related to those texts were examined. Both hedonic and eudaimonic motives were significantly and positively associated with strength of fan identification and text-based fan behavior. Fandom-based fan behavior was associated with eudaimonic motives. However, hedonic motives were only significantly associated with fandom-based fan behavior in interaction with strength of fan identity.

The clearest conclusion that can be drawn from the present study is that diverse motives drive fans’ attention to their preferred texts. Both eudaimonic and hedonic motives were associated with the strength of fan identity. This may be reflective of at least two phenomena. On the one hand, individuals who are more highly motivated to attend to a fictional text for whatever reason may simply be more likely to engage with that text in a way that facilitates becoming a fan. The viewer who expects her or his experience to be very much characterized by hedonic pleasure and the viewer who expects her or his experience to be very much characterized by insight and meaning are both likely to attend more carefully, respond more quickly, and become more immersed in the narrative. This heightened stage of involvement, sometimes described as transportation, would then be expected to contribute to the kind of identification characteristic of being a fan (see Taylor, 2015).

On the other hand, individuals who more strongly identify as fans may simply expect to get more out of their interaction with texts. Inasmuch as the individual fan’s identity includes a relationship with the fictional text, cognitive consistency may demand the perception that that text is both rewarding and pleasurable.
Motives for viewing are also significantly associated with fan behavior. They are most clearly and independently related to text-based behavior. This is unsurprising; it documents that stronger motivations to engage with the text are associated with more types of actual engagement with the text. It is worth noting that this engagement extends beyond the literal canonical text itself, as it includes engaging additional sources of information regarding the text such as relevant online resources. This may be because this supplemental material alters or improves the experience with the text itself. Alternately, it is possible that fans experience these additional resources as part of the text, as distinctions between text and supplemental material increasingly blur. Consider the fictional text of Harry Potter; at its core, the text consists of seven novels and the eight motion pictures based on those novels. More recently, supplemental informational materials have been added, including reference books, the online interactive Pottermore website that includes both informative and quasi-narrative elements, and a series of films set in the same fictional universe, though featuring almost entirely different characters. At some level, the fan may be a fan of the entire corpus of information and narrative rather than strictly of the narrative itself.

Interestingly, only one text-based fan behavior was linked solely with either motive—looking at text-related web sites was associated with strength of eudaimonic motives, but not hedonic motives. This is likely reflective of the sort of materials available on text-related web sites. Sites that focus on very specific details and esoterica, discussions of fan theories, and additional details related to the text but beyond the bounds of the narratives of the core text are likely of most use in pursuing eudaimonic goals. Reading or viewing such sites may not provide light-hearted hedonic enjoyment, but it may facilitate greater or more nuanced meaning making around the text.
Fan behavior oriented towards fan communities was more complicated. On the one hand, fandom-based fan behavior was associated with eudaimonic motives. This is consistent with Tsay-Vogel & Sanders’s (2017) findings. The fact that these motives did not interact significantly with fan identification is also consistent with Tsay-Vogel and Sanders’s reasoning that eudaimonic motives and connection with a broader fan community are both a function of underlying personality traits and interests.

Insight into this link may be found in the persistently-observed link between exposure to fictional narratives and increased empathy and theory of mind (see Dodell-Feder & Tamir, 2018 for a meta-analysis). Some have argued that this link suggests that our attraction, as a species, to narratives developed in order to serve a social unification function (Oatley, Dunbar, & Budelmann, 2018). Understanding fictional narratives requires the audience member to understand the minds and motives of characters, facilitating social function (Carroll, 2018). In such a case, engaging fiction in meaningful ways would be expected to be, at some level, driven by social needs. Others have argued that fiction facilitates meaning-making and personal transformation in part because it involves, and indeed requires, setting aside the self and identifying with the fictional character. In doing so, the audience member has the experience of both experiencing emotions as the fictional character and reflecting on those emotions as audience member (Djikic & Oatley, 2014). Again, this suggests a fundamental relationship between engagement with the narrative that might be typical of eudaimonic experiences and a drive for (and ability to experience) community.

Additional insight may be gained in light of the specific observation that the fandom-based fan behaviors most clearly associated with eudaimonic motives involved engaging in discussions about texts with other fans. In the present sample, when fans engaged with other
fans, it was mostly to communicate about the text. Effusing over texts can only drive so much conversation; it is likely that much of this community conversation around fan texts involves meaning making of the sort that would also be associated with eudaimonic motives. Fandom participation, then, may be an extension of the questing for meaning and relevance that the eudaimonia-motivated fan sought in engaging with the text.

Hedonic motives, unlike eudaimonic motives, were only significantly associated with fandom-related fan behavior in interaction with strength of fan identification. That is, the degree to which hedonic motives resulted in engaging with other fans depended on the strength of the fan identification of the fan by whom those hedonic motives were experienced. Hedonic motives do not, in and of themselves, lead to engagement with fan communities. Instead, only for individuals that strongly identify as fans do hedonic motives lead to more interaction with fan communities. When contrasted with Tsay-Vogel and Sanders’s (2017) explanation for the link between eudaimonic motives and fan community participation, that is, that both reflect an underlying intense interest in and engagement with the people and world around them, this may suggest a narrower focus is associated with hedonic motives. It is possible that hedonic motives are more universal, for example, if they truly require fewer cognitive or social resources. If this is the case, then the observed relationship may suggest that fan identity functions as a moderator of the influence of hedonic motives. For many fans, hedonic motives simply drive attention to the text. But as strength of fan identification increases, the motive to experience the hedonic pleasures of the text are increasingly understood within the context of that fan identity. The highly-identified fan may engage in the broader fan community because she or he believes that is what fans do.
Another possibility is that, for individuals who are motivated strongly by hedonic concerns, participation in fan communities facilitates identification as a fan. For fans with eudaimonic motives, engagement with the text itself is meaningful, providing enough of an emphasis on the fan’s relationship with the text to make being a fan a salient identity. For fans with principally hedonic motives, that salience may only arise from participation in fan communities, from engagement with other fans.

The emergence in the cluster analysis of the highly-motivated cluster offers some added measure of insight. Fans who are highly-motivated to attend to their preferred text by expectations of both hedonic and eudaimonic experiences attend to the text most carefully, identify as fans most strongly, and participate with fan communities most intensely. These highly-motivated fans are not the rare exception—given their prevalence and the strength of their fan identification, it is clear that these make up the lion’s share of those we are likely to think of as fans.

These conclusions are somewhat limited by the methods of the study. Most importantly, a longitudinal design would allow clearer insights into the causal direction of the observed relationships. In addition, there is a need for further development of standard measures to be employed in the study of fan engagement and identification with fan communities. These could be profitably developed in future research.

Additionally, generalizability is limited by the nature of the sample. Although participants recruited through mTurk tend to be more representative of the U.S. population than other convenience samples (Buhrmeister, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011), they also tend to have relatively more formal education (Shapiro, Chandler, & Mueller, 2013). Although recruitment materials did not require participants to be a fan of any fictional narrative, much less a text of a
specific genre, it is true that most self-identified fans in the sample reported being fans of a science-fiction or fantasy text, possibly a function of the sample characteristics. The results may therefore be less than representative of fans of other types of text. However, some theorists have argued that these genres, relative to others, are particularly likely to generate the sort of intense attention and involvement characteristic of being a fan (see Hartwell, 1984). It may simply be that most fans of fictional texts are fans of science fiction or fantasy.

Ultimately, however, it is clear that fans of fictional texts approach and engage with their preferred texts for multiple and complex motives, and that these motives increase in strength along with the strength of fan identification.
References


Table 1.  
Fan Behavior Frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Frequency ((N = 360))</th>
<th>Correlation with eudaimonic motives</th>
<th>Correlations with hedonic motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repeated viewing of text</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>.20***</td>
<td>.13**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked at web site related to text</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>.31***</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bought text materials (DVDs, books, etc)</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.13**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read fan fiction</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bought other merchandise relating to text</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about text with others</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>.22***</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed text on Internet</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted about text on social media</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worn clothing referring to text</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written fan fiction</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressed in a costume related to text</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended fan club meeting</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* An affirmative response indicated that the respondent had engaged in the behavior with respect to the text of which they were a fan “in the last 5 years”. Correlations are partial correlations controlling for strength of fan identification.
Table 2

*Correlations among Key Study Variables*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fanship (fan identity)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Text-based fan behavior</td>
<td>.41***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fandom-based fan behavior</td>
<td>.41***</td>
<td>.65***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Eudaimonic motives</td>
<td>.26***</td>
<td>.30***</td>
<td>.29***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hedonic motives</td>
<td>.23***</td>
<td>.23***</td>
<td>.21***</td>
<td>.20***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* ***p < .001*
Table 3

A Regression Model Predicting Strength of Fan Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>-.22***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (male = 1)</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic motives</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.16***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eudaimonic motives</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.24***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ F (6, 353) = 11.63, p < .001, R^2 = .17 \]

Note. *** \( p \leq .001 \)
Table 4

Regression Analyses Predicting Text-based and Fandom-based Fan Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Text-based fan behavior</th>
<th>Fandom-based fan behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>-.19***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (male = 1)</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>-.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic motives</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eudaimonic motives</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>.23***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan Identity</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.28***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan ID x Hedonic Motives</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan ID x Eudaimonic motives</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
F (7, 352) = 17.73, p < .001, \quad F (9, 350) = 13.67, p < .001,
\]

\[
R^2 = .26 \quad \quad R^2 = .26
\]

Note. ** p < .01, *** p < .001. Eudaimonic motives: reverse-coded mirrored logarithmic transformation of the original averaged score. Fan identity: logarithmic transformation of the original score.
### Table 5

Mean Scores for Motives, Identification, and Fan Behavior by Cluster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cluster 1 (n= 113)</th>
<th>Cluster 2 (n = 157)</th>
<th>Cluster 3 (n = 96)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic Motives</td>
<td>4.64 (.93)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.69 (.62)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.00 (1.05)&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eudaimonic Motives</td>
<td>3.46 (.88)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.61 (.66)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.54 (.57)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan Identification</td>
<td>2.15 (1.12)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.82 (1.16)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.18 (1.06)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text-based Fan Behavior</td>
<td>2.60 (1.61)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.95 (1.79)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.03 (1.25)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fandom-based Fan Behavior</td>
<td>1.98 (1.22)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.80 (1.16)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.20 (.92)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Values within the same row with differing subscripts differed at $p < .001$ according to Scheffe post-hoc tests.

For all variables, the untransformed means and SD are reported. Analyses were repeated with the transformed variables, and outcomes remained the same.