

The motivational determinants of literary reading: Planned behavior¹ theory¹

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ABSTRACT

As tracking studies all over the world report an increasing decline in time devoted to leisure reading, the interest in research related to leisure reading, its antecedents, and benefits has increased dramatically in recent years. However, available studies have generally used a restricted range of possible determinants of leisure reading. A comprehensive model of reading is needed that allows the assignation of relative importance to different possible causes. In this study, an investigation of literary leisure reading was conducted within the framework of planned behavior theory (TPB). Respondents (N=522) completed a questionnaire that measured behavioral beliefs (linguistic/practical skills, broadening one's horizon, prestige, self-cohesion, relief from boredom, and affect), normative beliefs, control beliefs (ability and opportunity), past behavior, and reading intention. Multiple regression analyses showed that affective behavioral beliefs, the ability component of perceived behavioral control, and past behavior were the strongest predictors of literary leisure reading intention ($R^2=.60$). Utilitarian beliefs with regard to broadening one's horizon and self-cohesion also had a positive impact on the intention to read literature in the six months to come. The effects of linguistic/practical

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skills, prestige, relief from boredom, normative beliefs, and the opportunity component of perceived behavioral control on reading intention were modest. On the basis of these results, it is concluded that the TPB can advance our understanding of the factors that determine the intention to read literature. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed and suggestions for future research are made.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, there has been a growing concern about the increasing decline in time devoted to leisure reading. Tracking studies all over the world report an increasing decline in time devoted to reading (see, for example, *Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau*, 1995). In addition, studies show, among other things, that each generation of students in secondary education reads less than the generations before them did and that comprehension levels in all age groups tested declines from one generation to the next. Their interest in reading also declines as they grow older (Alexander and Filler, 1976; Baker and Wigfield, 1999; Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). It is therefore feared that these developments threaten the reading proficiency of adolescents and adults.

In the past, several projects have been initiated to counter the observed trend (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985). These projects have as an aim to stimulate the attitude toward reading fiction. The attitude toward reading has since long been considered an important outcome of education (Aarnoutse and Boland, 1993; Malmquist and Brus, 1974). The underlying assumption is that by improving the attitudes toward reading fiction, students will start to read more and also to read better fictional books (Van Schooten, 1994; Lundberg and Linnakylä, 1992). Enhancing students' attitudes toward reading literature and their reading behavior thus has become a modern goal of literary education (Van Schooten, 1994).

The trends in literary education correlate with scholars' interest in the motivational and attitudinal bases of (adolescent) leisure reading and, as a result, several studies have been

current work is in the area of hedonic and cultural consumption behavior and patterns.

reported that investigate the relationship between these bases and reading behavior (see, for example, Allen, Cipielewski, and Stanovich, 1992; Greaney and Neuman, 1983; 1990; Greaney and Hegarty, 1987; Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997; Baker and Wigfield, 1999; Nell, 1988a, 1988b). However, few attempts have been made to develop a general model of reading behavior accommodating a broad range of possible antecedents of leisure reading. In this study, a comprehensive model of leisure reading was developed on the basis of general theory and methods from attitude research. More in particular, literary leisure reading was modeled by applying Ajzen=s Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1988; 1991). The theory allows to assign relative importance to different possible causes of reading behavior. With this understanding, it should be easier to identify the factors that have to be stressed in educational, communicational or governmental interventions that are designed to raise the level of (adolescent) leisure reading.

The Theory of Planned Behavior and leisure reading

Ajzen=s Theory of Planned Behavior is an extension of the widely applied Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). It is designed to predict and explain human behavior in a specific context. The underlying assumption of the TPB is that broad attitudes and personality traits have an impact on specific behaviors only indirectly by influencing some of the factors present in the framework of the theory. The TPB is illustrated in Figure 1. The following discussion of the TPB is partly adopted from Ajzen (1991).

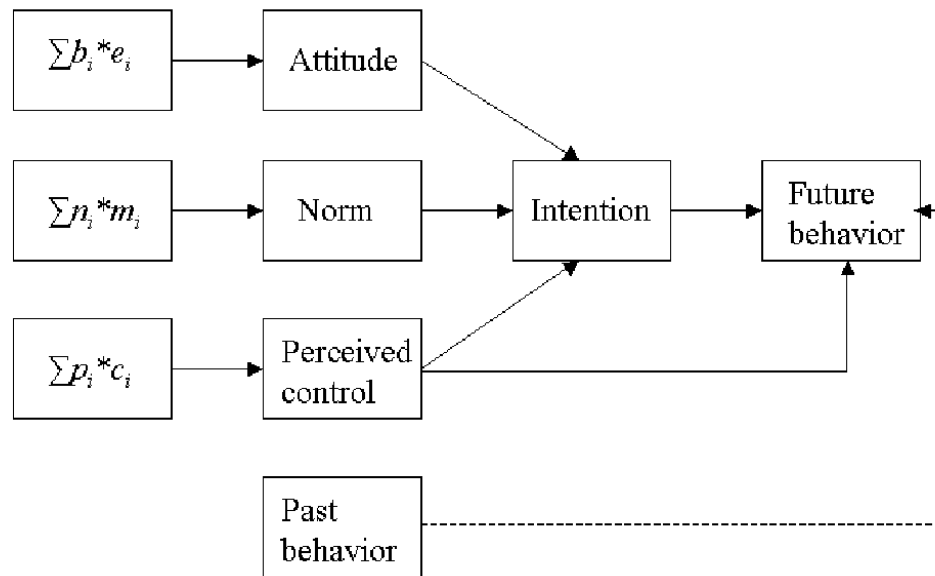


Figure 1: The Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory postulates that the intention to perform a particular behavior is guided by salient beliefs that are considered to be the prevailing - and conceptually independent - determinants of a person's action. Intentions here represent a person's motivation, conscious plan or decision to exert effort to perform the behavior, for example, reading literature. According to the theory, there are three types of beliefs that could affect the likelihood of engaging in the behavior: behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs. The first type of beliefs concerns beliefs, which are assumed to influence attitudes towards the behavior. Attitudes here refer to the overall evaluation of the behavior by the person. There are several studies on the reading motives of children that give support to the attitudinal component of the TPB and its importance in predicting reading intentions. Greaney and Neuman's studies (1983; 1990) showed that children found reading to be instrumental in fulfilling enjoyment needs, utilitarian needs, and escapist needs. Enjoyment needs included the beliefs that reading is exciting and interesting, whereas utilitarian needs included reading as

useful in school and for later careers. Escapist needs concerned the beliefs that reading is a way of passing time or distracting one's thoughts from personal worries. These categories of outcome beliefs of reading have also been found to be associated with adult's reading in studies by Dent and Seligman (1993), and Lewis and Teale (1980;1982). In Dent and Seligman's study (1993), some additional addressed functions related to reading as being instrumental in attaining self-organization and self-cohesion, real and fantasized relatedness, affect regulation, and the repetition or working through of conflicts. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that children's beliefs about efficacy to achieve, valuing of achievement, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and goals for achievement were predictive of their reading amount and breadth. A study by Baker and Wigfield (1999) found additional support for the findings reported by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997).

The second type of beliefs in the TPB are beliefs, which constitute the underlying determinants of subjective norms (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norms are beliefs about whether significant others think he or she should engage in the behavior. Some evidence for the role of subjective norm in reading behavior has also been reported in the literature. The study by Greaney and Neuman (1983) revealed that students judged reading as useful because their parents considered it important whereas two other studies have found social aspects of motivation to be associated with the breadth of the reading experience (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997; Baker and Wigfield, 1999). One proposed aspect of social motivation in these studies that was associated with breadth of reading was social reasons for reading, the process of sharing the meanings gained from reading with friends and family compliance. The other aspect was reading because of an external social goal or requirement, such as reading to a brother or a sister.

The third type of beliefs in the TPB concerns control beliefs, which are at the basis of perceptions of behavioral control. They refer to one's perception of control over the behavior and are assumed to reflect the obstacles that one encountered in past behavioral performances (Ajzen, 1991). Researchers have theorized extensively about the importance of perceived behavioral control in this domain (see, for example, Wigfield and McCan, 1996; Wigfield and

Guthrie, 1997; Baker and Wigfield, 1999). Since reading is a cognitive activity for which certain cognitive resources are required, the reading self-efficacy construct has been introduced. Reading self-efficacy is defined as the belief in the ability to read successfully (Wigfield and McCan, 1996). The construct is closely related to the PBC component of the TPB in a sense that the TPB places the construct of self-efficacy belief within a more general framework of the relations among beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that individuals' beliefs about their competence and self-efficacy at reading correlated between .30 and .36 with the outside school reading breadth of Grade 4 and 5 children. Baker and Wigfield (1999) reported a correlation of .43 between children's self-efficacy and reading activity. Challenge, the willingness to take on difficult reading material, was based on the competence and efficacy belief constructs. It correlated .51 with reading activity. An important implication of this work for the attitude towards reading is that when individuals believe they are competent and efficacious at reading, they should be more likely to engage in reading.

In the TPB, the strength of each salient behavioral belief (b) is combined in a multiplicative fashion with the subject's evaluation (e) of the outcome of that belief, the normative belief (n) is multiplied by the person's motivation to comply (m), and each control belief (c) is multiplied by the perceived power (p) of a given control factor to facilitate or inhibit performance of the behavior. For each group of belief products, the sum measure is computed that determines the corresponding global measure. That is, the three global measures, attitude towards the behavior (A_B), subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioral control (PBC) determine intention. PBC determines both intention and behavior: if intention does not change, the likelihood of engaging in a behavior is likely to increase with greater PBC. In addition, if PBC accurately reflects actual control, it is predicted to directly influence behavior. The predictors in the TPB are assumed to be sufficient to account for intentions and actions, but they are not all necessary in any given application (Ajzen, 1988; 1991). That is, the relative importance of A_B , SN, and PBC in predicting is expected to vary across behaviors and

situations. The relative importance of each of the predictors can be established by regression or by structural equation modeling (Ajzen, 1991).

By now, the TPB is widely accepted and meta-analytic reviews of the TPB and the TRA provide impressive support for the predictive power of the TPB in terms of the percentage of variance explained in intentions and behavior (see reviews by Ajzen, 1991; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Armitage and Conner, 2001; Albarracín, Johnson, Fishbein, and Muellerleile, 2001).

Despite the massive support of the TPB, researchers have made efforts to improve the model by considering past behavior as a variable that acts upon behavior through its impact on intention (see, for example, Aarts, Verplanken, and Van Knippenberg, 1998; Bentler and Speckart, 1979). Eagly and Chaiken (1993) have reviewed relevant studies and provided statistical evidence for the fact that the model's predictive power can be improved to a great extent by measures of past behavior or self-reported habit. The authors suggest there was clear evidence that additional predictor variables can add significantly to predictability in some situations. Hagger, Chatzisarantis, and Biddle (2002) conducted a meta-analytical review of the TRA and the TPB in physical activity and reported evidence that the inclusion of past behavior in the model resulted in the attenuation of the intention-behavior, attitude-intention, self-efficacy-intention, and self-efficacy-behavior relationships. The authors concluded that the inclusion of past behavior is an important addition to the model. Thus, in this study, past (reading) behavior was added to the TPB (see Figure 1).

Despite the research attention devoted to leisure reading, no conclusive evidence on the validity of the TPB in the context of leisure reading has been provided. In this study, we will try to examine the validity of the TPB in the context of leisure reading. Specifically, we will consider reading literature and test the model through regression analysis to examine the following research question: Do beliefs about behavioral aspects of a person's attitude, beliefs about the normative expectations of relevant others, beliefs about facilitating or inhibiting control factors, and past behavior provide an explanation consistent with empirical data of the determinants of reading intention? In the work reported in this study, future reading behavior was not measured and, therefore, the relationship between intention and behavior and PBC

and behavior was not tested for. Regarding the latter relationship, Madden, Ellen, and Ajzen (1992) suggest that PBC has a direct effect on behavior (see Figure 1). That is, PBC may directly affect behavior when people have limited ability to achieve their goal (for example, in giving up cigarettes). However, compared with actions such as smoking cessation, (adult) leisure reading is a relatively unconstrained behavior and PBC is unlikely to have a strong direct effect on reading behavior. An empirical study was conducted which is described next.

METHOD

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted in which salient behavioral and control beliefs for the activity of reading literary novels were elicited (in line with recommendations made by Ajzen (1991)). Participants in the pilot study were visitors of the local library in Tilburg, a medium-sized town in North Brabant, the Netherlands. There were 33 participants, who completed a questionnaire that dealt with reading literary novels. Following Ajzen and Driver (1991), salient behavioral beliefs and perceived behavioral control factors were elicited from the respondents through a written questionnaire. In the questionnaire, the possible benefits and costs, as well as the factors or conditions that made it easier or difficult to engage in reading literature were inquired about. The responses provided by the respondents were content analyzed. Responses regarding behavioral beliefs were categorized according to the nature of the responses, that is utilitarian, enjoyment, and escape beliefs (according to Greaney and Neuman, 1983; 1990). Similar responses were grouped together, and the most frequently mentioned utilitarian, enjoyment, and escape benefits were retained for inclusion in the main part of the study. With regard to the costs, the most frequent responses were included in the main study. Normative referents were not elicited to keep the length of the tasks reasonable; earlier (pilot) studies have shown partner, parents, siblings, other relatives, close friends, colleagues and fellow students to be relevant normative referents regarding leisure reading.

Main study

Requirements for inclusion in the study were set. These were that respondents had read at least one fiction title in the past twelve months, and were at least 18 years of age or older. The latter requirement was set because the TPB prescribes that behavior is under volitional control, that is planned, rather than automatic or prescribed (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Because students in secondary education are obliged to read from lists, the minimum age was set at 18 to ascertain that voluntary reading behavior was measured. In total, 626 Dutch respondents reacted positively on a primer send out to 6000 randomly drawn addresses. These respondents met the requirements and were willing to participate. Next, a questionnaire on university letterheads was mailed from November 2001 through December 2001 and a total of 522 questionnaires (9% response rate of 6000) with usable responses were returned by 227 males (43%) and 291 females (56%) (1% missing). The average age of the respondents was 51 years with a standard deviation of 14.9 years. Of the respondents, 51% had higher vocational training or university education.

Questionnaire

Behavioral beliefs. Behavioral belief-based measures were developed for the purpose of this study. On the basis of the work of several researchers, three main types of beliefs were distinguished. First, utilitarian beliefs were derived from the literature that are related to gaining insight into the self, others and/or life, and learning/educational goals (Greaney and Neuman, 1983; 1990; Lewis and Taele, 1980; 1982). Gaining prestige and self-respect, gaining recognition from others, and self-cohesion were identified as additional beliefs (Dent and Seligman, 1993; Nell, 1988a; Van Luxemburg, Bal, and Weststeijn, 1999). Second, enjoyment beliefs were distinguished that relate to the need for pleasure that is derived from the reading

process itself (Dent and Seligman, 1993; Greaney and Neuman, 1983; 1990; Lewis and Taelle, 1980; 1982; Nell, 1988a; 1988b; Van Luxemburg et al., 1999); and third, escapist beliefs were identified that relate to the instrumentality of reading in obtaining relief from boredom (Dent and Seligman, 1993; Greaney and Neuman, 1983; 1990; Nell, 1988a). The beliefs that were derived from the literature were supplemented with the items that were elicited from the respondents in the pilot study. This resulted in a total of 23 behavioral beliefs for the activity of reading literature.

Two seven-point scales were taken to assess the strength and the subjective evaluations of each of the behavioral belief-based measures. Scales were scored in an unipolar fashion. Scale ranges for the subjective and strength evaluations were restricted to 1 (*extremely unlikely; not important at all*) to 7 (*extremely likely; very important*), analogous to the 0-to-1 scale of objective probability (see Ajzen (1991) for a discussion). The product of these scales was computed. These products were then summed in accordance with the TPB. It was decided that the same polar referents should be taken for the strength evaluations of the affective, utilitarian, and escapist beliefs (*not important at all-very important*).

Normative beliefs. In accordance with practices recommended by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), the belief-based measure of subjective norm was composed of two items each scored on a 7-point bipolar (-3 to +3) scale. An example of the normative belief measure was: *If I (started) read(ing) literary novels, my partner would approve-disapprove@.* The following referents were distinguished: partner, parents, brothers/sisters, other relatives, close friends, close colleagues, and fellow students. The category *>not applicable to me=* was added for obvious reasons. In addition, the response category *>I haven=t got a clue=* was added for those respondents who were unable to judge their referent=s opinion. Regarding the second measure, motivations to comply were elicited only once for each referent, that is, with respect to the respondent=s reading behavior in general. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 7-point unipolar rating scale how important it was to the respondent that a referent approved or disapproved of their reading behavior (*not at all important-very important*). In the analyses,

the bipolar scores were recoded into unipolar scores, ranging from 1 to 7. Consistent with the TPB, each normative belief was multiplied by the corresponding motivation to comply, and the resulting products were summed across the seven normative referents.

Perceived Behavioral Control. Belief-based measures of control were derived from a literature review and the pilot study. They were assessed by means of seven-point response scales (cf. Ajzen and Driver, 1991). Ajzen (1991) refers to perceived behavioral control as the resources and opportunities available to a person. Given the different conceptual nature of more enduring, stable cognitive resources and temporal, inhibiting or stimulating control factors (opportunities), the PBC was split up into an ability component and an opportunity component (see MacInnis, Moorman, and Jaworski (1991) for a discussion on the distinction between ability and opportunity; see also Trafimow, Sheeran, Conner, and Finlay (2002) for a discussion on the multidimensional nature of PBC). Respondents were first asked with respect to seven factors, whether a certain factor was true for them (for example, AI have sufficient reading skill to read literary novels@: completely false-completely true). The second question was about the perceived effect of the factor=s presence (for example, AReading skill makes reading literary novels *more difficult-easier*@). Responses to the first question were scored from 1 (completely false) to 7 (completely true) whereas the items belonging to the second question were scored in a bipolar fashion: -3 (more difficult) to +3 (easier). In the analyses, the bipolar scores were recoded into unipolar scores, ranging from 1 to 7. Two composite score were computed by multiplying the items with each other, and by summing the products across the different control factors.

Past behavior. Past behavior was measured by asking respondents to distribute 100 points among the genres literary fiction, romance novels, and mystery novels (a constant-sum approach). The distribution was intended to indicate the proportion of books in each genre they had read in the previous 12 months. The percentage of points attributed to reading literature was reduced to five categories (with an interval of 20 points) and the resulting

variable was multiplied by the scores on a modification of a four-item reading-intensity scale developed by Stokmans (1996). The newly constructed variable was taken as an indicator of past reading behavior.

Behavioral Intentions. A final set of items in the questionnaire was about the intention to engage in reading literary novels in the next six months (cf. Ajzen and Driver, 1992).

Respondents were asked (1) to indicate the frequency with which they will try to engage in reading literary novels in the next 6 months (*not at all-frequently*) and (2) to assess the effort they will make to engage in the activity in the next 6 months (*none-very much*). The correlations between the two items was .78 ($p < .01$). Responses to the two items were averaged to provide a measure of behavioral intention.

RESULTS

Reliability analysis

Table 1 reports the Cronbach=s alpha reliability coefficients of the belief-based indices used in the regression analyses. The belief-based measures of the utilitarian, affective, and escapist goals of reading, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control were not expected to necessarily have high internal consistencies. When constructing standard scales, items are selected according to criteria that assure high internal consistency. This was not the case in the present study: items were supplied by participants in a pilot study and by the available literature on reading motives. Despite this fact, the belief-based measures had high reliabilities. It was therefore decided to retain the combined indexes in the subsequent regression analyses. The individual items that make up the combined indexes are presented in the Appendix.

Table 1: Alpha Reliability Coefficients for the scales (N=498)

Cronbach=s alpha (# of items)

Belief-based utilitarian measures

Linguistic/practical skills $\blacktriangleleft b_i e_i$.82 (4)
Broadening one=s horizon $\blacktriangleleft b_i e_i$.85 (4)
Prestige $\blacktriangleleft b_i e_i$.85 (3)
Selfcohesion $\blacktriangleleft b_i e_i$.79 (3)

Belief-based escapist measure

Relief from boredom $\blacktriangleleft b_i e_i$.71 (3)
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Belief-based affective measure

Affect $\blacktriangleleft b_i e_i$.90 (6)
SN $\blacktriangleleft n_i m_i$.88 (7)
PBC $\blacktriangleleft p_i c_i$	
Ability	.85 (4)
Opportunity	.85 (3)

$\blacktriangleleft b_i e_i$ = summed belief-based attitude measure; $\blacktriangleleft n_i m_i$ = summed beliefbased measure of subjective norm;

$\blacktriangleleft p_i c_i$ = summed beliefbased measure of perceived behavioral control.

Correlations between the belief-based measures, SN, and PBC

The correlations between the combined indexes are reported in Table 2. The table shows that all belief-based measures were positively correlated: correlations ranged between .28 and .70 ($p < .01$). Correlations in bold indicate that multicollinearity may be a concern in regression analyses (equal to or higher than .60 are in bold). The ideal situation would be to have a number of independent variables highly correlated with the dependent variable, but with little correlation among themselves. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The correlation between >linguistic/practical skills= and >broadening one=s horizon= was .68 ($p < .01$),

whereas the latter variable correlated .50 with self-cohesion and .70 with affect. In addition, prestige correlated .63 with self-cohesion. The belief-based measures were only moderately correlated with SN and PBC. An exception was affect. It correlated .47 ($p < .01$) with the ability-component of PBC. Finally, the ability component of PBC correlated .54 with the opportunity-component of PBC ($p < .01$). The three components that correlated highly with each other (>broadening one=s horizon=, affect, and PBC) correlated also highly with past behavior and reading intention (as shown in the last two columns in Table 2), therefore creating a possible situation of multicollinearity. Past behavior correlated .65 with reading intention, which was significant at a level of alpha is one percent.

Table 2: Pearson correlations between the components of the TPB (N=513)

	Beliefbased measures						SN	PBC		PB	RI
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	-	.68**	.32**	.48**	.33**	.53**	.14**	.19**	.15**	.01	.18**
2		-	.32**	.50**	.35**	.70**	.15**	.34**	.15**	.21**	.37**
3			-	.63**	.29**	.28**	.20**	.01	.08	-.06	.07
4				-	.34**	.40**	.16**	.11*	.03	.09*	.22**
5					-	.49**	.07	.15**	.16**	.01	.13**
6						-	.12**	.47**	.26**	.35**	.50**
7							-	.09*	.12**	.07	.13**
8								-	.54**	.44**	.61**
9									-	.30**	.38**
10										-	.65**

1 = Linguistic/practical skills; 2 = Broadening one's horizon; 3 = Prestige; 4 = Self-cohesion; 5 = Relief from boredom; 6 = Affect; 7 = SN; 8 = PBC/Ability; 9 = PBC/Opportunity; 10 = Past behavior (PB); 11 = reading intention (RI); Correlations in bold indicate problems with multicollinearity in regression analyses (equal to or higher than .60)

Given that multicollinearity may be present in the data, it was decided to test a nested model by means of multiple regression analyses. This procedure provides information about the disturbing effects of high correlations between the predictor variables. Since multicollinearity in the data does not allow for firm conclusions about the weights of each of the components in the model (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1998), the model will be used primarily for prediction. However, careful interpretations of the regression coefficients will be given. The results of the regression analyses are reported in the next paragraph.

Multiple regression analyses

Table 3 reports the statistics with regard to the regression of reading intention on the belief-based measures, SN, PBC, and past behavior. On the basis of the casewise diagnostics, three unrepresentative outliers were identified and removed from the analyses. They had a standard residual larger than three. The assumptions of the equality of variance, linearity, and independence of error were not violated. The coefficient variance-decomposition analysis with their condition indices were examined. None of the condition indexes exceeded the commonly used value of 30.0 (Hair et al., 1998). Consequently, we failed to pass the first step, finding no support for the existence of multicollinearity in the regression results. If we lower the threshold value to a value of 15 for the condition index, only one coefficient loads highly (PBC) in the final model, which is evident. Examination of the VIF-values and the tolerance values did not give conclusive insights into which variables were intercorrelated: Hair et al. (1998) suggest a cutoff threshold tolerance value of .10: all variables exceeded this threshold value substantially.

Table 3: Multiple regressions of reading intention on belief-based measures (N=499)

	β_{wt}	β_{wt}	β_{wt}	β_{wt}	β_{wt}	β_{wt}	β_{wt}	β_{wt}	β_{wt}	β_{wt}
Step 1:	.18**	-.12*	-.11 ^a	-.13*	-.14*	-.16**	-.16**	-.12**	-.13**	-.02
practical skills										
Step 2:		.45**	.45**	.42**	.42**	.09	.08	.04	.04	.02
Broadening one's horizon										
Step 3: Prestige			-.05	-.12*	-.12*	-.12*	-.13**	-.08*	-.08 ^a	-.01
Step 4: Self cohesion				.15*	.14*	.14**	.14**	.15**	.14**	.08 ^a
Step 5: Relief from					.01	-.15**	-.15**	-.11**	-.12**	-.03

	boredom									
Step 6: Affect						.57**	.57**	.33**	.33**	.18**
Step 7: SN							.08*	.05	.04	.03
Step 8: PBC - ability								.46**	.42**	.30**
Step 9: PBC - opportunit y									.08 ^a	.02
Step 10: Past beha- vior										.45**
R ²	.03	.14	.14	.15	.15	.30	.30	.46	.46	.60
R ² change	.03**	.11**	.00	.01*	.00	.15**	.01 ^a	.16**	.00 ^a	.14**
Model F	16.30	62.37	1.17	6.09	.06	101.79	3.70	142.04	3.50	174.61

β wt=standardized regression coefficients

* p ≤ .05; ** p < .01; ^a p < .10

Despite the diagnostics, we can observe that, in general, multicollinearity has affected the estimates of the betas in the regression analyses. In the first model, linguistic/practical skills was predictive of reading intention, though the total amount of explained variance was only 3 percent ($p < .01$). Adding >broadening one=s horizon= to the model increased the amount of explained variance substantially with 11 percent ($F=62.37$; F-change significant at 1 percent). However, the sign of the first predictor had changed from positive to negative, suggesting that this variable shares information with the second one. Since the simple correlations between the two predictors and reading intention were positive, we might subscribe the change of the sign to multicollinearity, even though this effect on the estimation procedure occurs primarily at relatively high levels of multicollinearity (above .80) (Hair et al., 1998). A similar observation can be made for prestige and self-cohesion: prestige did not add to the total amount of explained variance in the third model (F-change was not significant at a level of 1 percent).

However, when self-cohesion was entered into the model, both variables contributed significantly to the amount of explained variance. At this point, the total amount of explained variance had increased to 15 percent ($F=6.09$; F -change was significant at 1 percent). The addition of affect to the model, resulted in a substantial increase of explained variance with 15 percent ($F=101.97$; F -change significant at 1 percent). Though most of the betas in this model remained constant, the beta of >broadening one=s horizon= dropped from .42 to .09 ($p>.05$). This drop can be explained by multicollinearity between affect and >broadening one=s horizon= (see Table 2). The beta of >relief from boredom= increased from .01 to -.15 ($p<.01$), suggesting that this variable shares some information with other variables in the model as well. SN made a minor contribution to the explained variance ($F=3.70$; F -change significant at 10 percent), but it was the ability component of PBC that explained an additional 16 percent of the variance ($F=142.04$; F -change significant at 1 percent). After adding the ability component of PBC, the beta of affect dropped from .57 to .33. It remained significant at a level of alpha is one percent. Finally, past behavior explained an additional 14 percent of the variance, adding the total amount of explained variance up to 60 percent ($F=174.61$; F -change significant at 1 percent). In the final model, affect, the ability-component of PBC, and past behavior were the predictors with the strongest impact on the intention to read literature in the six months to come: the more positive the beliefs that reading literature is instrumental in fulfilling affective goals, the higher the perceived ability to read literature, and the more past experiences one has, the greater the intention to read literature in the near future. These results are in line with the simple correlations between affect, the ability component of PBC, past behavior, and reading intention (see Table 2). The correlation of the former three variables with the latter one, were, respectively, .50, .61, and .65. Apparently, they have the strongest impact on reading intention, therefore surpassing the effect of other variables in the model on reading intention.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In the past, several studies have focused on motivational and attitudinal beliefs with regard to leisure reading (see, for example, Allen et al., 1992; Greaney and Neuman, 1983; 1990; Greaney and Hegarty, 1987; Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997; Baker and Wigfield, 1999). These studies have identified a variety of important belief dimensions that are instrumental in predicting and explaining reading behavior. In the present study, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was applied to leisure reading as a conceptual framework in which the diverse research findings could be integrated.

Although multicollinearity in the data does not allow for firm conclusions about the weights or the signs of each of the components in the model, it would be substantively incorrect to interpret from these results that affect, the ability-component of PBC, and past behavior were the only variables that had an impact on reading intention. Some additional variables demonstrated higher impact as well. However, the similarity of their effect dictates that only the strongest ones are needed in the prediction process. We cautiously suggest that utilitarian beliefs with regard to broadening one's horizon, and realizing self-cohesion have a positive impact on the intention to read literature in the six months to come as well.

The data suggest that the relationships between beliefs that reading literature is instrumental in obtaining prestige and a relief from boredom, on the one hand, and the intention to read literature in the near future, on the other hand, are negative. The correlations between prestige and boredom, on the one hand, and reading intention, on the other hand, ranged between .07 and .13 (the latter was significant at $p=.01$). When controlling for past behavior, the correlations increased: their range was between .14 and .16 (both significant at $p=.01$). Since the beta's of these two predictor variables were negative, it appears that multicollinearity has resulted in the reversal of signs for these two variables. Given these considerations, we will not attempt to interpret the regression coefficients of >linguistic/practical skills=, prestige, and boredom. We do suggest, however, that enhancing students' attitudes toward reading literature and their reading behavior should remain an important goal of literary education. Teachers and policy makers should be aware of the fact that stimulating students to enjoy their reading (affective beliefs), to make them aware of the

fact that reading allows one to broaden one's horizon, and to make them certain of their ability to read successfully (increasing reading self-efficacy) are the best ways to encourage reading behavior. This effect will occur, regardless of whether one has engaged in the activity of reading in the past.

In this study, some evidence for the further extension of the TPB has been provided. PBC was split up into an ability and an opportunity component: although multicollinearity in the data did not allow for firm conclusions about the weights of each of the components in the model, a distinction between ability and opportunity seems to be justified. Trafimow et al. (2002) already reported results that support a distinction between perceived voluntary control over the activity and the perceived difficulty of the activity. The results of this study support this distinction by showing that perceived difficulty is a better predictor of reading intention. In addition, an additional distinction is suggested in that temporal, inhibiting or stimulating control factors explained, although only to a minor extent, unique variance in reading intention.

Aarts et al. (1998) proposed that when behavior is performed repeatedly and becomes habitual, it is guided by automated cognitive processes, thereby establishing a boundary condition for the applicability of attitude-behavior models. Despite their considerations, we found that the inclusion of past behavior resulted in the attenuation of the attitude-intention and the PBC-intention relationships. This result was in line with Hagger et al. (2002), providing support for their conclusion that the inclusion of past behavior is an important addition to the model: it was the strongest predictor of the intention to read in the near future.

As with any empirical study, this study has certain limitations that should not be confused with the model's limitations. A first limitation is that only behavioral intention was studied, and not actual behavior. A longitudinal design is recommended in which evidence is obtained for the accuracy and validity of the popular self-report behaviors over a 12-month period (Ajzen and Driver, 1992). A second limitation is that few behavioral beliefs about the costs of reading literary novels were addressed in this study. In general, research on attitude towards reading shows that reading is seen as good and desirable. As a consequence, few costs have been mentioned in the pilot studies intended to generate salient beliefs. Research results show

that the time that adolescents devote to reading is declining. Thus, interest should not only go to the factors that stimulate actual reading behavior but also to factors that inhibit this behavior, so that they can be remedied. It would be desirable for future studies to replicate this study and extend it with additional behavioral beliefs about the costs of engaging in the activity. The TPB offers a useful theoretical framework that is empirically testable and that allows the researcher to examine the relations of these costs and benefits behind a consumer's reading intention.

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Behavioral belief

Affect

To experience feelings of beauty*

To stimulate one's imagination*

To become surprised*

To have feelings evoked

To lose oneself in a story

To get carried away in a story

Relief from Boredom

To create excitement

To kill the time

To chase away boredom

Utility - Intellectual development

Extensive vocabulary

Improved linguistic skills

Greater practical insight

Greater practical knowledge

Utility - Broadening one's horizon

To learn more about others*

To read real-life stories*

To sharpen up one's intellectual capacity*

To have a different look at things*

Self-cohesion

Appendix

Behavioral belief

To have a clear view of how to live*

To provide oneself with an identity

To get a feeling of safety and security

Prestige

To gain prestige

‘belonging’

To be appreciated by others

* denotes salient beliefs that were elicited from respondents in the pilot study
