

User Motivation and Technology Acceptance in Online Learning Environments

The paper claims to refine the view on motivational variables, which have been previously shown to have a strong influence on learning activities. It argues for the need to include additional variables when measuring a person's motivation, so as to better understand how person's attitudes towards new technologies influences their adoption of them.

The paper builds upon the idea that the expectations that a person may have of the benefits gained from using the technology at hand is one of the main variables influencing if they adopt them. The bigger the boost in performance they expect, or the smaller the effort they expect to have to put into the task, make up the overall expectations. The other factor is the social context, as in the institution or friend group, and their attitude towards the technology.

An important observation is the difference between workplace and educational settings when it comes to the motivational aspect of people's behavior. Extrinsic motivators are common in the workplace (salary, hierarchical position within the organization, social status), while in educational settings, intrinsic motivators play a much more important role. Motivation for training (our problem space) is mainly intrinsic; but since extrinsic factors can carry more weight, this could hint towards the need for a social aspect to sustain a long term solution.

The paper found a significant correlation between institutional support and decreased amotivation, as in between the user expectation of reduced effort and increased performance. There is also a clear link between moderate to low social support and high amotivation. Although the paper states that further research is needed, this clearly indicates that any solution must look for support on the social circles of the user.

Ultimately, the key idea from this paper (from our project's perspective) is the importance of the environment in which the proposed solution will be acting. Furthermore, the solution will more likely be found in the relations between users than on interactions between a user and an app. With this in mind, the social component will have to be explored through the different research instruments at our disposal.