# What motivates creators of the Metaverse? A study on the effects of intrinsic need satisfaction and external incentives.

Julia Ungefug[1]

[1] *Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, School of Business, Economics and Society, Lange Gasse 20, 90403 Nürnberg*

## 1. Comparison with Roblox

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the motivation driving content creators in the metaverse. By comparing our findings with previous research on Roblox content creators, we were able to highlight both similarities and differences in the underlying motivational factors.
In our study, we chose a 90% significance level, whereas the Roblox study used a 95% significance level. This decision was made to allow for a slightly higher tolerance for variability while still maintaining statistical reliability.
At the beginning, I want to analyze the overall and specific motivation behind content creation for Minecraft and Roblox by investigating significant correlations between dependent variables and their influencing factors.

### 1.1. Overall Motivation

The analysis shows a highly significant correlation ($p < 0.001$) between *intention to continue creating content* and internal motivation for both *Minecraft* and *Roblox* creators. This finding suggests that creators who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to continue producing content over time. External incentives appears to play a minor role in influencing long-term engagement.
For *Minecraft* creators, both internal motivation ($p < 0.05$) and external motivation ($p < 0.01$) show a significant correlation with *average time invested weekly*, indicating that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play a role in influencing the amount of effort and time dedicated to content production
A strong correlation ($p < 0.001$) was found between internal motivation and *word of mouth* promotion among *Minecraft* creators. Internally motivated creators are significantly more likely to recommend content creation to others, highlighting the significant impact of a sense of community and skills development in encouraging a creative network. Again, external motivation seems to be less relevant in this context.

### 1.2. Specific Motivation

#### 1.2.1. Intention to continue creating content

*Roblox* creators show a significant positive correlation between intention to continue and enjoyment ($p<0.01$), passing time ($p<0.05$), and status and recognition from others ($p<0.05$). Creators who enjoy content creation and use it as a means to

relax or pass time are more likely to continue creating content. This suggests that intrinsic motivation plays a key role in sustaining engagement. In addition, the influence of status and approval from others suggests that younger creators value social validation as a motivating factor. Another observation is that creators in Roblox prefer to work alone rather than collaborate on projects, suggesting that individual effort is more highly valued in the platform's content ecosystem.
In contrast, *Minecraft* creators show a different set of motivators with skill development ($p<0.01$), self expression ($p<0.10$) and a negative correlation with social interaction in terms of keeping in touch ($p<0.05$). The positive correlation between intention to continue and skill development suggests that Minecraft creators are often driven by a desire to improve their skills, particularly in areas such as modding and Redstone mechanics. Interestingly, social interaction, specifically maintaining contact, negatively correlates with continuance intention. Rather than using the game to stay in touch with existing friends, players may be more inclined to meet new people through creative communities. This is consistent with Minecraft serving as a platform for content creation and exploration, while players may prefer to use other social platforms to maintain long-term friendships.

#### 1.2.2. Average Time Invested Weekly

The ability to earn income, particularly through the accumulation of Robux, is a strong motivator for *Roblox* content creators ($p<0.01$). This highlights the financial incentives built into the platform's ecosystem, where monetization opportunities drive content contribution. Many creators dedicate a significant amount of time to content creation in the hope of generating revenue.
In contrast to Roblox, where financial incentives dominate, Minecraft creators appear to be motivated by altruistic behavior. The correlation between helping behavior and average time invested weekly ($p<0.10$) suggests that users invest time in creating content to support and help others. This motivation is consistent with Minecraft's strong collaborative culture, where tutorials, modding guides, and community-driven projects thrive.

#### 1.2.3. Word of Mouth

Word of Mouth was investigated only for *Minecraft* and shows notable correlations with social interaction: sense of community ($p<0.01$), passing time ($p<0.10$), skill development ($p<0.05$) and professional advancement ($p<0.10$). Word of mouth for Minecraft is significantly driven by social motivations. Players who maintain contact with others and feel a strong sense of community are more likely to promote and discuss the game. This reinforces Minecraft’s identity as a community-centric platform where shared experiences drive engagement. Passing time leads to the

assumption that creators who engage in content creation as a hobby are more likely to share and promote it within their community. Additionally, the correlation with professional advancement and skill development suggests that some creators use Minecraft for career-related goals. Minecraft provides an opportunity to develop valuable skills such as programming and game design.

The comparison between Minecraft and Roblox shows that both platforms encourage intrinsic motivation, although the specific motivational patterns of content creators differ. Need satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping creator engagement, as intrinsic motivation is strongly linked to fulfilling psychological needs. Roblox creators are primarily driven by enjoyment and financial incentives, while Minecraft creators focus on skill development and community engagement, highlighting the unique cultures of each platform.

## 2. Theoretical and practical contribution

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) provides a valuable framework for categorizing the motivation of Minecraft content creators into internal and external dimensions (Blumer & Katz, 1974; Ruggiero, 2000). However, our findings reveal a limitation of the current UGT framework: it does not fully distinguish between passive engagement (e.g., casual players seeking escapism and entertainment) and active engagement (e.g., content creators with long-term, purpose-driven goals). Active creators often exhibit a form of gratification that is closely tied to skill development. Skill-based gratification appears to be a critical motivational factor that existing UGT constructs do not fully capture.

### 2.1. Practical Implications

The results of this study offer several practical implications for content creators operating in the metaverse, particularly in environments such as Minecraft.

The metaverse is an almost limitless platform for creative expression. Content creators can use flexibility of digital environments to experiment with new ideas, styles, and formats. Moreover, the dynamic nature of metaverse platforms supports continuous learning and skill development. By integrating structured learning modules, creators can incrementally improve both their technical skills and their creative expertise.

Shared workspaces and collaborative projects encourage interaction among creators, facilitating the exchange of ideas and collective problem solving. The community-driven approach not only enriches the creative process, but also builds networks of support and collaboration. Metaverse platforms empower creators to undertake larger, purposeful projects, such as world-building initiatives. These

projects allow creators to leave a lasting impact on digital environments by aligning their content with broader narratives and community goals.

Nonfinancial incentives play a particularly important role in maintaining engagement in the metaverse. For example, digital rewards such as badges, exclusive skins, and other in-game collectibles serve as status symbols and tangible markers of achievement. These forms of recognition not only reinforce a creator's digital identity, but also motivate continued participation and creativity. But proper payment can also encourage creators, as the example of Roblox shows. Previous research suggests that while external rewards can increase engagement, they are less effective at sustaining long-term engagement than intrinsic motivation (Correa, 2010).

While the metaverse fosters creativity and community, it can also attract escapist behavior. It is important for platform designers and community managers to implement measures to moderate excessive escapism and ensure that creators maintain a balanced focus on personal well-being.

## 3. Limitations and future research

This study provides valuable insights into the motivation of content creators in metaverse, with a specific focus on Minecraft. However, several limitations affect the generalizability and longevity of the findings, and they also highlight promising avenues for future research.

By focusing exclusively on Minecraft content creators, the results of the study may not be generalized to other metaverse platforms. The comparative study of Roblox content creators showed partially different results, although many findings were similar. This suggests that while some motivators are universal across platforms, specific platform architectures, community dynamics, and policies may lead to nuanced differences in creator behavior (Beil et al., 2021; Dadson, 2024; Wolfenstein, 2025). Future research should compare multiple platforms to determine which motivators are universal and which are platform specific.

The study relied on self-reported survey data, which can introduce biases such as social desirability or limited participant introspection (Beil et al., 2021). Another point to consider is that the study design does not capture how the motivation of those creating content may evolve over time (Media in the Metaverse: Creating Content in the Future | Future Media Hubs, 2022). Long-term studies would be beneficial to understand how technological advances and community dynamics affect creators' motivation over time.

As generative AI becomes increasingly integrated into metaverse platforms, future research should explore its impact on content creation workflows, evolving skill

requirements, and potential implications for creative autonomy. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of metaverse technologies means that the tools and platforms used in this study may soon become obsolete. As technology continues to evolve, the relevance of these findings may diminish, underscoring the need for ongoing research that adapts to new developments. Researchers should explore how emerging technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and blockchain (e.g., NFTs) will shape the landscape of content creation and monetization opportunities in the metaverse (The Future of Content Creation in the Metaverse: How Creators Can Prepare for New Opportunities, 2025).

Additionally, there is an urgent need for the development of robust ethical guidelines tailored to virtual environments. These guidelines should address issues such as digital consent, data security, and the psychological impact of immersive technologies (Soares, 2023; Zhuk, 2024).

Community engagement plays a critical role in the success of content creators in the metaverse (The Future of Content Creation in the Metaverse: How Creators Can Prepare for New Opportunities, 2025). Future studies could examine how virtual communities form, sustain themselves, and influence creator success. Understanding these dynamics across platforms would provide further insight into the social factors that drive content creation.

Future research should expand to include diverse metaverse environments, incorporate longitudinal methods, and address the emerging implications of emerging technologies such as generative AI, AR and VR. Furthermore, the development of tailored ethical guidelines and a deeper exploration of community-building dynamics will be essential to capture the evolving landscape of content creation in the metaverse.

## 4. Reflection on own Contribution and Learning

Our group collaborated extensively throughout the process. Most of the survey customization, data collection, and data processing in Excel and SmartPLS were done together. However, each step also included tasks that were handled individually or by a subset of the group.

We collectively decided which questions we want to add to tailor the survey to the target group of Minecraft. Franziska and I worked together to refine the revised questions in a Word document after making the necessary changes to ensure that they could be properly reviewed.

During data collection, each of us chose a platform to recruit participants for the survey. My primary platform was Reddit, as I was the only one with an account that had been active for several years. This lent credibility and trustworthiness to my

posts. In addition, I had connections with several Minecraft players and content creators because I had played Minecraft for a long time and was part of a smaller community. I reached out to them to participate in the survey and, if possible, share it with their communities and acquaintances. We also designed a poster that we put up individually and distributed directly to potential participants at the university. I was responsible for designing Minecraft character and the overall layout of the poster. Among both my existing connections and some new ones, I want to highlight that several people expressed strong interest among Minecraft content creators and were curious about the results of our study.

I want to highlight that I learned a lot about data collection strategies. One of the biggest challenges in collecting data was finding enough participants. Many people were either not interested or simply did not respond, which made it difficult to get enough responses. Despite using different platforms and strategies, it took a lot of effort and persistence to get participants. Early on, we realized that simply posting messages in group chats had very little impact. Instead, it was much more effective to reach out directly to individual creator, especially if we started a conversation first, genuinely complimented their content, or engaged with them before introducing the survey. This approach resulted in a much higher response rate than simply dropping a survey link.

For the next step, data preparation in Excel, we first analysed the data together and developed a plan for cleaning it up. We decided what criteria should be met to categorise responses as content creators and weeded out non-creators. We deleted columns that were not relevant, such as the date and time the survey was completed, the time it took to complete it, etc., and we deleted all columns with age below 16. Franziska and I did the final touches as we had some initial problems importing the data into SmartPLS. We cleaned up the data by correcting the spelling of the countries, went through the text responses to see if they were non-serious, had commas in them as we needed to remove them for the CSV data, and sorted out non-serious responses.

A key learning here was the importance of clear data preparation. Cleaning and organizing data in Excel before importing it into SmartPLS was more complex than I expected, and small errors in this step could affect the entire analysis. This experience could help me make more efficient data workflows in future projects.

For processing the data in SmartPLS, Lusil took the lead in uploading the models into the program. Franziska and I assisted her in categorizing the questions, building the model, and running the analysis. This step required considerable effort, as neither of us had used the software before. We first had to understand how constructs such as dependent and independent variables should be linked and how the model differed between overall and specific motivation. Once the initial setup

was complete, we continued to refine the model as a group of four, discussing and adjusting the model together. I would say I learned the most in this step. Working with the software was challenging at first, but through trial and error, I became much more comfortable with it. If I were to analyze a survey again, I would be able to do it much more quickly and effectively. I also have a much clearer understanding of key concepts such as reflective and formative variables.
However, in my opinion, the interpretation of the results was the most interesting part because it allowed us to see the real purpose of our data collection. Franziska and I were responsible for comparing our study to the Roblox study. Seeing how different motivations influence creating behavior for Minecraft vs. Roblox highlighted how contextual factors shape user behavior. This analysis deepened my understanding of statistical validity and reliability and how to critically evaluate results in a broader context.
For the presentation of the results, I revised the slide master and integrated content from previous presentations into the final version. I also created the Minecraft avatars for our team and refined the final design. In addition, I contributed to parts of the analysis, specifically examining validity and reliability factors for overall and specific motivations. I also prepared the slides for reflection and our contribution.
Lastly for the paper, my part was the methods with the description of the participants and the procedure, measurements and validity and reliability.

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