

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY
AND COUNSELLING
(IJEPC)**www.ijepec.com**EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON
MOTIVATIONAL CONSTRUCTS FOR ONLINE LEARNING**Nur Maizura Lin^{1*}, Suzana Hamzah², Nur Huslinda Che Mat³, Rosdin Rosly⁴, Noor Hanim Rahmat⁵¹ Department of English Language and LinguisticsEmail: nurma218@uitm.edu.my² Department of English Language and LinguisticsEmail: suzana@uitm.edu.my³ Department of English Language and LinguisticsEmail: nurhuslinda@uitm.edu.my⁴ Department of English Language and LinguisticsEmail: rr@uitm.edu.my⁵ Department of English Language and LinguisticsEmail: noorh763@uitm.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

Article Info:**Article history:**

Received date: 22.04.2025

Revised date: 05.05.2025

Accepted date: 04.06.2025

Published date: 30.06.2025

To cite this document:

Lin, N. M., Hamzah, S., Che Mat, N. H., Rosly, R., & Rahmat, N. H. (2025). Exploring The Influence Of Social Support On Motivational Constructs For Online Learning. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 10 (58), 1033-1049.

DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.1058066.

This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Abstract:**

Online learning has indeed taken the front seat in today's educational setting. It is seen as indispensable among both full-time and part-time learners. Besides having its benefits, online learning also comes with its set of challenges, and one of the main concerns of online education is the motivation levels among learners. This quantitative study investigated the influence of social support on motivational constructs among adult learners at a local higher learning institution and the study was rooted from Fowler's (2018) concept of online learning motivation. The 121 participants in the study came from three different disciplines: Business, Social Science, and Science and Technology. An online survey using Google Forms was prepared and distributed to distance learners via the WhatsApp application. The survey rooted from Fowler (2018) consisted of four sections, including the demographic profile section. Upon completion of the data collection stage, data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Positive findings were shown in the study and several pedagogical implications for teaching and learning in the classroom were suggested at the end of this article especially for educators.

Keywords:

Social Support, Drawbacks Of Online Learning, Motivation, Adult Learners, Distance Education

Introduction

Online learning has been practiced in higher learning institutions for many years. Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has been indispensable in higher learning institutions due to its demand from students (Kim & Siew, 2024). One of its benefits is that online learning has opened up paths for working adults to continue their studies anytime and anywhere. Zhu et al. (2020) mentioned that enrolments in online courses have grown significantly in recent years. This finding is supported by a study by the National Centre of Education Statistics (2022), where the percentage of undergraduate enrolment grew significantly in 2020 compared to 2019.

As defined by Pozdnyakova & Pozdnyakov (2017), distance learning is defined as a form of learning for adult learners who have other priorities besides learning. For instance, they may have families, work, and hold other responsibilities. This means that they have other priorities and face challenges in their learning. Several studies highlighted that one of the concerns when it comes to online learning among distance learners is their levels of motivation (Teo & Ho, 2024; Firat, Kiliç & Yüzer, 2017). Mahyoob (2020) in his study pointed out that one of the main challenges of online learning is student communication. In his study, it was discovered that a lack of interaction with instructors and peers had caused students to feel lonely, stressed, and created anxiety in them. Although the study was not conducted with distance learners as its main respondents, the study was carried out among full-time learners at a higher learning institution setting.

Motivation is seen as one of the essential tools to ensure that distance learners complete their education and graduate. Due to its importance, it is integral that studies be conducted to look into the social support that distance learners receive to keep them motivated. Several studies stressed the importance of social support in motivating undergraduate learners (Mahyoob, 2020; Yusop et al., 2022 & Rahmat et al., 2024). Yusop et al. (2020) in their study examined the influence of social support, expectancy, and value among undergraduates, and found that the three factors influenced the students' motivation. In another study by Rahmat et al. (2024), a similar finding was also discovered by the researchers. Their study examined the influence of social support, expectancy, and values for learning Mandarin online. The findings of their study strengthen the findings in the study conducted by Yusop et al. (2022), where learners felt engaged in their learning when they received responses and guidance from their instructors. Both findings contradict the findings by Mahyoob (2020). Based on the above-mentioned studies, it could be seen that full-time undergraduates felt that social support, expectancy, and values influenced learners' motivation to learn online, and did not look into the influence on distance learners. Hence, there is a need to look into this.

Statement of Problem

In an ideal educational environment, online learning platforms provide flexible and accessible education, especially for adults managing multiple responsibilities. These platforms offer self-paced learning, extensive resources, and opportunities for interaction with instructors and peers. Effective online education fosters intrinsic motivation, where learners engage out of interest rather than external pressure. Additionally, social support—such as peer collaboration, discussions, and instructor guidance—enhances learner engagement and perseverance (Zhou & Yu, 2023). With adequate support, learners are more likely to find value in their studies and believe in their ability to succeed. However, lack of social support and motivation among learners could lead to problems in schools (Meideiros, 2021).

Many adult learners struggle with maintaining motivation in online learning due to isolation, lack of immediate feedback, and difficulties in self-regulation. Research indicates that social support is crucial in mitigating these challenges by reinforcing learners' confidence and coping abilities (Safitri et. al, 2021). Despite the availability of communication tools, inadequate social interaction can lead to lower motivation and increased dropout rates. Without meaningful engagement with peers and instructors, students may struggle to stay focused and committed to their studies.

This research explores how social support influences key motivational constructs—expectancy, and value—in online learning among adult learners. Understanding this relationship is crucial for designing strategies that enhance student engagement and success. By examining the impact of different support systems, this study aims to identify interventions that improve motivation in online education (Zhou & Yu, 2023). The findings will help educators and instructional designers create more supportive online learning environments that foster better learning outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to explore learners' perceptions of their online learning motivation. Specifically, this study was conducted to look into the following research objectives;

- To explore learners' perceptions of social support in online learning environments.
- To examine learners' perceptions of expectancy beliefs in online learning.
- To investigate learners' perceived value in online learning.
- To determine the relationship between social support and motivational components in online learning.

Literature Review

Online Learning Motivation

Online learning presents a double-edged sword: while it enables greater access to education, particularly for adult learners, it also poses barriers to engagement and success. Several studies have explored these conflicting aspects, highlighting both the affordances and constraints of digital education.

A number of studies have looked at the influence of social support, expectancy and value on motivation among undergraduates. A study by Rahmat et al., (2024) investigated Mandarin language learners' motivation based on the three factors. 156 undergraduates took part in the quantitative study. Results showed that learners were more engaged when they received responses and guidance from their instructors. Besides that, they felt more confident and had high expectations when their instructors taught them concepts and materials. It was also discovered that the learners were sometimes intrinsically motivated to learn and understand materials. Overall, it was stressed that the three factors motivated learners leading to successful online language learning. In another similar study carried out by Yusop et al. (2021), it was found that the three factors, social support, expectancy, and value, influenced learners' motivation to learn online and that the three factors had positive relationship. This study also examined the three factors, the same as Rahmat et al. (2024) study. 102 higher learning institutions learners responded to a survey for this study, and it was concluded that with clear

guidance, sufficient materials, and clear instructions from teachers, they can help students to succeed.

Minohara and Musni (2025) conducted a study looking into first-year college students' motivation and social support in online distance learning with a focus on several aspects including the learners' the relationship between motivation and social support as well as differences in motivation and support across demographic groups. 181 university freshmen took part in this study by answering survey questions given to them. It was reported that the learners received high levels of informational support compared to affirmational, emotional and instrumental support at moderate levels. It was highlighted by the researchers that the aforementioned support systems were significant in assisting learners in their online learning experience. Besides that, moderate levels of correlation was found between motivation and social support and this encouraged the learners' motivation to participate in online learning. The researchers concluded that motivation and social support are key factors in success among students in online distance learning. They also highlighted the importance of a supportive learning environment where it enhances the learners' intrinsic motivation. The findings of this study supports the findings of the two other studies discussed above.

In a study conducted by Chen et al. (2023), to understand the underlying mechanisms of the relationship between social support and academic engagement, 2106 number of respondents coming from different universities in China answered a questionnaire. The results showed that social support influences the students' motivation to achieve academic success. Besides that, academic motivation plays a role in supporting academic engagement. Overall, it can be said that, there's a relationship between social support, motivation and academic achievement.

Tareen and Haand (2020) investigated postgraduate students' perceptions of online learning at UiTM, revealing that online education is valued for its flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and accessibility. Students appreciated the ability to engage in learning at their own pace and avoid geographical limitations. Similarly, Mazlifah et al. (2024) found that 72.3% of adult learners preferred fully online programs, citing financial savings and time efficiency as key benefits. These findings align with broader research suggesting that online learning is particularly beneficial for working professionals and distance learners who require adaptable study schedules (Zhu et al., 2020).

However, these advantages are counterbalanced by significant drawbacks. Tareen and Haand (2020) found that students struggled with a lack of interaction, unclear assessment strategies, and insufficient feedback, which negatively impacted their learning experience. Likewise, Mazlifah et al. (2024) highlighted social isolation and limited engagement opportunities as major concerns among distance learners. The absence of real-time interactions with peers and instructors often leads to reduced motivation and a diminished sense of community (Meşe & Sevilen, 2021). Furthermore, technological barriers, including unstable internet connectivity and unfamiliarity with online learning platforms, have been reported as deterrents to effective engagement (Sri, 2020).

While these studies acknowledge the importance of structured online learning environments, they do not sufficiently address how social support mechanisms (peer interaction, instructor involvement, and family encouragement) mitigate these challenges. The existing literature does not provide a comprehensive analysis of the types of social support that influence online learning engagement, leaving a gap that this study seeks to fill.

Past Studies on Benefits and Drawbacks of Online Learning

A 2020 study by Tareen & Haand focused on investigating UiTM postgraduates' perceptions on the advantages of online learning and its obstacles, which highlighted the benefits of online learning, disclosing that many universities and colleges have increasingly invested in online platforms. The main benefits included are new markets, economic gains, prospects for international partnerships, faster implementation of educational programmes, and heightened faculty development. A survey questionnaire was distributed for the study to 30 UiTM students (22 full-time and 8 part-time Master of Education students). The findings presented that online learning is convenient, encourages student participation, and meets students' needs. The findings also found the lack of communication among students, uncertain assessment strategy, lack of detailed response and support from lecturers, and the absence of interest in learning as downsides of online learning.

Mazlifah et al (2024) used a mixed-methods research design, utilising both quantitative and qualitative data, data were gathered from 1582 students from the Institute of Continuing Education & Professional Studies (ICEPS). From the data, 73.3% approve of a fully online distance programme (ODL), while 21.4% prefer a blended programme and 6.3% favour exclusive face-to-face learning. The most notable response when enquiring about their motivations to learn online, the effectiveness of cost reduction, has the highest score of 57.4%. In addition, 51% of the students remark on time efficiency, reduced commuting times, and the flexibility to apply diverse devices for learning. On the contrary, two aspects that obtain lower scores are students' satisfaction through ODL (37.6%) and the effectiveness of data presentation (35.8%).

Online learning proposes many advantages, namely flexibility, easy access, various educational resources, and is also very cost-effective. Nevertheless, it also presents challenges such as inadequate face-to-face interaction, issues with technicality, limited hands-on learning, and the necessity for strong self-motivation. In spite of these downsides, online learning remains an essential factor in higher education, offering prospects for continuous learning and academic progression.

Conceptual Framework

Online learning is the norm for many learners these days. Regardless of the type of learning, social support is considered important. Social support provides a positive impact on learning in different ways. Learners need social support from sources such as family, peers, the environment, the instructor, and many more. Social support provides a positive impact on learning in different ways (Rahmat,et.al, 2021). This study (Figure 1) looks at how social support influences expectancy and value in online learning. This study is rooted in Fowler's (2018) concept of online learning motivation. According to Fowler (2018), social support refers to social engagement and instructor support. Next, Fowler (2018) states that expectancy refers to self-efficacy and control of learning beliefs. Value refers to intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientation as well as task value.

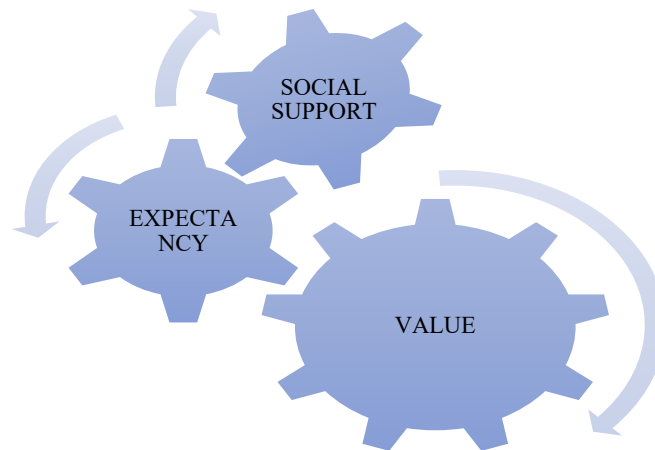


Figure 1-Conceptual Framework of the Study

Influence of social support on motivational constructs for online learning

Methodology

This quantitative study is done to explore the motivational factors for learning among undergraduates. A purposive sample of 121 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted in Fowler (2018) to reveal the variables in Table 1 below. The survey has 4 sections. Section A has items on the demographic profile. Section B has 12 items on expectancy. Section C has 14 items on value. Section D has 12 items on social support.

Table 1: Distribution of Items in the Survey

SECTION	MOTIVATION (KEYWORD)	SUB-SCALES	NO OF ITEMS		
B	EXPECTANCY	Self-Efficacy	8	13	.931
		Control of Learning Beliefs	5		
C	VALUE	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	5	16	.914
		Extrinsic Goal Orientation	5		
		Task Value	6		
D	SOCIAL SUPPORT	Social Engagement	5	11	.881
		Instructor Support	6		
				40	.951

Table 1 shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .931 for Expectancy, .914 for Value, and .881 for Social Support. The overall external reliability for all 40 items is .951; thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

Findings***Findings for Demographic Profile*****Table 2- Percentage for Q1- Gender**

NO	ITEM	PERCENTAGE
1	Male	41%
2	Female	59%

Based on Table 2 above, 41% of the respondents were male and 59% female. More female respondents took part in this study compared to male respondents.

Table 3- Percentage for Q2- Mode of Study

NO	ITEM	PERCENTAGE
1	Part-time	98%
2	Full-time	2%

Table 3 above shows the percentage of the respondents' mode of study based on their enrollment. A majority of 98% of the respondents were part-time students. On the other hand, only 2% of the respondents were full-time students.

Table 4- Percentage for Q3- Level of Study

NO	ITEM	PERCENTAGE
1	Diploma	17%
2	Degree	80%
3	Post-graduate	3%

Table 4 above presents the percentage of respondents' level of study. The majority (80%) of the respondents were degree-level students. Next, 17 percent of the respondents were diploma-level students, and a small percentage of 3% came from the post-graduate level.

Table 5- Percentage for Q4- Discipline

NO	ITEM	PERCENTAGE
1	Science & Technology	24%
2	Social Science	12%
3	Business	64%

The table above shows the percentage of the different disciplines the respondents were from. 64 percent of the respondents came from the Business discipline, and 24 percent of the respondents were from the Science and Technology discipline. A small percentage of the respondents were from the Social Science discipline. Only 12 percent of the respondents came from this discipline.

Findings for Social Support

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive social support in online learning?

In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) social engagement and (ii) instructor support.

Table 6- Mean for (i) Social Engagement (SSE)

Statement	Mean	SD
SSEQ1 feel "disconnected" from my teacher and fellow students in classes.	2.7	1.24200
SSEQ2I pay attention in classes.	4.2	.73387
SSEQ3I enjoy class discussions.	4.2	.80229
SSEQ4I feel like I can freely communicate with other students in classes.	4	.85619
SSEQ5I have strong relationships with fellow students in this course.	3.7	1.05392

Table 6 presents the findings on social engagement in online learning, revealing underlying challenges. The lowest mean score (2.7) for the statement "I feel disconnected from my teacher and fellow students" suggests that a significant number of learners experience isolation in online classes. This aligns with common concerns about the lack of face-to-face interactions in digital learning environments. However, students reported high engagement when it came to focusing in class (4.2) and participating in discussions (4.2), indicating that well-structured activities can facilitate meaningful interaction despite the online format. Furthermore, the ability to communicate freely with peers scored 4.0, suggesting that while students find communication feasible, it may not always lead to deep social connections. The slightly lower score (3.7) for having strong relationships with fellow students highlights the need for more structured opportunities for peer bonding, such as group projects or informal networking spaces. Overall, while students engage with online learning content, addressing feelings of social isolation remains a critical area for improvement.

Table 7- Mean for (ii) Instructor Support (SIS)

Statement	Mean	SD
SISQ1I feel like I can freely communicate with the instructor in this class.	4.1	.78957
SISQ2The instructor responds to questions, clearly, completely, and in a timely manner.	4.2	.73892
SISQ3The instructor's expectations for me in this class are clear.	4.2	.74920
SISQ4The instructor provides the guidance I need to be successful in this class.	4.3	.68353
SISQ5 The instructor presents the material in a way that makes it relevant to me.	4.2	.72205
SISQ6The instructor provides regular feedback that helps me gauge my performance in this class.	4.2	.75277

Findings in Table 7 indicate that instructor support appears to play a significant role in students' online learning experiences, with all mean scores exceeding 4.0, indicating general satisfaction. The highest-rated aspect (4.3) was the statement that instructors provide the necessary guidance for student success, suggesting that structured mentorship and instructional clarity significantly contribute to learners' confidence. Other critical areas, such as responsiveness to student questions, clear expectations, and the relevance of instructional materials, each scored 4.2, reinforcing the importance of well-organized course delivery. Notably, the ability to freely

communicate with instructors, while still positive (4.1), was rated slightly lower than other aspects. This might imply that some students still find it challenging to approach instructors in an online setting, possibly due to delayed responses or a lack of real-time interaction. These findings underscore the importance of maintaining strong student-instructor relationships in online education by ensuring timely communication, personalized feedback, and more interactive engagement strategies.

Findings for Expectancy

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive expectancy in online learning? In the context of this study, expectancy is measured by (i) self- efficacy and (ii) control of learning-beliefs.

Table 8- Mean for (i) Self- Efficacy (ESE)

Statement	Mean	SD
ESEQ1 I believe I'll receive excellent grades in my classes.	3.8	.87560
ESEQ2I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings.	3.5	1.00062
ESEQ3I'm confident I can learn the basic concepts that are being taught.	4	.88879
ESEQ4I'm confident I can understand the most complex material presented by the instructor.	3.5	1.09639
ESEQ5I'm confident I can do an excellent job on assignments and tests.	4.1	.76817
ESEQ6I expect to do well.	4.2	.81675
ESEQ7I'm certain I can master the skills being taught.	3.7	1.01266
ESEQ8Considering the difficulty of the classes, the teachers, and my skills, I think I can do well.	4	.79997

Table 8 presents the mean scores for Self-Efficacy (ESE), which reflect learners' confidence in their ability to perform well in online learning. The highest mean score (4.2) was recorded for the statement "I expect to do well," indicating a strong sense of optimism among respondents regarding their academic performance. Similarly, students expressed confidence in completing assignments and tests (4.1) and mastering basic concepts (4.0), suggesting that they believe in their ability to grasp fundamental learning materials. However, confidence levels slightly declined when it came to understanding complex materials, with mean scores of 3.5 for both "understanding the most difficult material" and "understanding the most complex material presented by the instructor." This suggests that while students generally feel capable, they may struggle with more challenging content in an online setting.

Overall, the findings indicate that while students possess a positive sense of self-efficacy, there is a need for targeted support strategies to enhance their confidence in tackling complex subjects in online learning environments.

Table 9- Mean for (ii) Control of Learning Beliefs (ECB)

Statement	Mean	SD
ECBQ1If I study in appropriate ways, then I'll be able to learn the material.	4.1	.81227
ECBQ2It's my own fault if I don't learn the material taught.	4	.98711
ECBQ3If I try hard enough, then I'll understand the material presented.	4.1	.77788
ECBQ4If I don't understand the material presented, it's because I didn't try hard enough.	3.7	1.00857
ECBQ5 If I don't understand the online material, it's ultimately my responsibility.	3.8	1.03213

Table 9 presents the mean scores for Control of Learning Beliefs (ECB), which measure students' perceptions of their responsibility and effort in mastering online learning materials. The highest mean scores (4.1) were recorded for statements such as "If I study in appropriate ways, then I'll be able to learn the material" and "If I try hard enough, then I'll understand the material presented," indicating that students strongly believe that effort and proper study habits directly impact their learning success. Additionally, a significant number of respondents acknowledged personal responsibility for their learning outcomes, with mean scores of 4.0 and 3.8 for statements emphasizing that failing to learn is their own fault or responsibility. However, a slightly lower score (3.7) for "If I don't understand the material presented, it's because I didn't try hard enough" suggests that some students recognize external factors, such as course design or instructor support, as influencing their ability to learn.

Overall, these findings highlight a positive sense of accountability among learners, reinforcing the idea that motivation and effort play crucial roles in their academic success in online learning. However, addressing external challenges, such as accessibility to learning resources and instructional clarity, could further enhance students' confidence and control over their learning outcomes.

Findings for Value

This section presents data to answer research question 3- How do learners perceive value in online learning? In the context of this study, value is measured by (i) intrinsic goal orientation, (ii) extrinsic goal orientation and (iii) task value.

Table 10- Mean for (i) Intrinsic Goal Orientation (VI)

Statement	Mean	SD
VIQ1I prefer online material that really challenges me, so I can learn new things.	3.7	.99344
VIQ2I prefer online material that arouses my curiosity, even if it's difficult to learn.	3.7	.98766
VIQ3 The most satisfying thing for me is trying to understand the online content as thoroughly as possible.	4	.82514

VIQ4 When working on assignments in online settings, I prioritize choosing topics that I can learn from, even if they may not result in the highest grade.	3.8	.91904
VIQ5 I am motivated to learn, even when I am working on an assignment on my own.	4.2	.77469

The data in Table 10 provides the mean scores for statements related to Intrinsic Goal Orientation (VI) in an online learning context. The findings suggest the following:

Learners generally prefer online material that challenges them and sparks curiosity, with a mean score of 3.7 for both VIQ1 and VIQ2. There is a stronger inclination toward understanding online content thoroughly, as reflected in a higher mean score of 4 for VIQ3. Students prioritise learning over grades when selecting topics for assignments, as shown by the mean score of 3.8 for VIQ4. The highest motivation is seen in working independently, with a mean score of 4.2 for VIQ5.

The results indicate that participants are intrinsically motivated in online learning environments, with a strong emphasis on curiosity, understanding, and independent learning. However, there is slightly less enthusiasm for challenging and curiosity-driven materials compared to independent learning.

Table 11- Mean for (ii) Extrinsic Goal Orientation (VE)

Statement	Mean	SD
VEQ1 Getting a good grade is the most satisfying thing for me.	4.7	.60154
VEQ2 The most important thing for me is to improve my overall grade point average, so my concern is getting a good grade.	4.4	.82414
VEQ3 I want to get better grades than most of the other students in my classes.	4.3	.85852
VEQ4 I want to do well in my classes because it's important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others.	4.4	.79470
VEQ5 I am motivated to excel in my studies to secure a well-paying job, promotions, and financial stability.	4.6	.66297

The data in Table 11 outlines the mean scores for statements related to Extrinsic Goal Orientation (VE) in online learning contexts. The findings highlight the following: Achieving good grades is the highest priority for participants, with VEQ1 receiving the highest mean score of 4.7. The focus on grades is also tied to improving overall GPA (VEQ2, 4.4) and outperforming peers (VEQ3, 4.3). External validation, such as demonstrating ability to family, friends, or employers, is significant, with VEQ4 scoring 4.4. Career aspirations, including financial stability and job success, are a strong motivating factor, as reflected in VEQ5 with a mean score of 4.6. Participants are highly extrinsically motivated in online learning, with strong emphasis on academic performance, external recognition, and career-related outcomes. While intrinsic factors may inspire some aspects of learning, these results demonstrate a dominant focus on tangible, external reward

Table 12- Mean for (iii) Task Value (VT)

Statement	Mean	SD
VTQ1I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in other courses.	4.3	.70045
VTQ2It is important for me to learn the course material in this class.	4.4	.61344
VTQ3I am very interested in the content area of this course.	4.3	.67766
VTQ4I think the course material in this class is useful for me to learn.	4.5	.61914
VTQ5I like the subject matter of this course.	4.3	.66318
VTQ6Understanding the subject matter of this course is very important to me.	4.4	.66556

The data in Table 12 presents the mean scores for Task Value (VT) in an online learning context. The key findings are:

Students recognize the relevance of course material to other courses (VTQ1, 4.3) and its overall usefulness (VTQ4, 4.5). There is a strong belief in the importance of learning the course material (VTQ2, 4.4) and understanding the subject matter (VTQ6, 4.4). Interest in the course content is consistently high, with VTQ3, VTQ5, and VTQ1 all scoring 4.3.

Overall, students perceive high value in their coursework, both in terms of practical application and personal interest. They see the material as relevant, useful, and important for their academic progress, indicating a strong engagement with learning.

Findings For The Relationship Between Social Support And Motivational Components In Online Learning

This section presents data to answer research question 4: Is there a relationship between social support and motivational components in online learning?

To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between social support and motivational components in online learning. Data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in Tables 12 and 13 below.

Table 13 -Correlation between Social Support and Value**Correlations**

		SOCIALsuppo rt	VALUE
SOCIALsupport	Pearson Correlation	1	.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	121	121
VALUE	Pearson Correlation	.635**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	121	121

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 13 shows there is an association between social support and value in online learning. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between social support and value in online learning($r=.635^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between social support and value in online learning.

Table 14 -Correlation between Expectancy and Social Support**Correlations**

		EXPECTANCY	SOCIALsuppo rt
EXPECTANCY	Pearson Correlation	1	.384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	121	121
SOCIALsupport	Pearson Correlation	.384**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	121	121

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 14 shows there is an association between social support and expectancy in online learning. Correlation analysis shows that there is a moderate significant association between social support and expectancy in online learning($r=.384^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level, and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a moderate positive relationship between social support and expectancy in online learning.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings and Discussions

Overall, based on the findings presented above, learners perceived that they received support from their instructors and classmates in online learning, and were seen as important. This means that social support was received by the distance learners. The findings in this study echo the findings by Rahmat et al. (2024), Chen et al. (2023), and Yusop et al. (2021). Both studies agreed that guidance and support from instructors are important. Besides that, the present study supports earlier work by Minohara and Musni (2025). Both studies looked into distance learners' motivation in online learning and social support. However, the findings of the current study differ from other past studies conducted by Tareen & Haand (2020) and Mazlifah et al. (2024). Although the two studies did not receive similar findings regarding social support in online learning, both studies indicated a positive outcome to online learning. Besides that, in this current study, the learners perceive that when it comes to their expectancy of online learning, they have a positive sense of self-efficacy and accountability in their learning. They too stressed that motivation plays a vital role in their success in online learning. Similar findings were also discovered in the studies by Meşe & Sevilen (2021 and Sri (2020). They both agreed that motivation is essential for learners learning online. Moreover, when learners feel motivated, they perceive high value in their learning. Hence, it shows that motivation drives learners in their learning process. Next, looking at the relationship between social support and motivational components in online learning, it is evident that there is a relationship between social support and motivational components in online learning. Findings showed a strong relationship between social support and value in online learning. On the other hand, a moderate positive relationship was found between social support and expectancy in online learning.

Based on this study, it can be concluded that social support plays a crucial role in shaping distance learners in online learning. A strong engagement towards learning can be seen, especially when high value is placed on it. The overall pattern suggests that when distance learners feel that they receive sufficient support, they are more motivated and view learning as purposeful.

Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings above, the study contributed to several pedagogical implications. Since social support from both educators and classmates was seen as important to learners in their online learning, therefore, it is essential to produce classroom activities that promote collaboration among learners and continuous engagement between educators and learners. In addition, continuous feedback and positive reinforcement from educators are vital in motivating learners to achieve their goals in their learning. This is seen as a contributing factor to motivate learners in their learning process and will reduce the feeling of isolation or alienation among learners. Hence, timely instructor feedback is valued.

Future research should explore how different technological tools and classroom activities can promote online learning and enhance learners' levels of motivation. Since the respondents of this study are adult learners, hence, it would be interesting to look into different teaching methods that can engage learners. Other than that, another aspect that could be explored is a comparative study between male and female adult learners. This is to identify and ensure that the different needs of the two genders are met when online learning takes place.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge and extend special gratitude to the faculty for their support in making this research happen.

References

- Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory. Prentice-Hall
- Chen, C., Bian, F. & Zhu, Y. The relationship between social support and academic engagement among university students: the chain mediating effects of life satisfaction and academic motivation. *BMC Public Health*, 23, 2368 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-17301-3>
- Firat, M., Kiliç, H., & Yüzer, T. V. (2017). Level of intrinsic motivation of distance education students in e-learning environments. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 34(1), 63-70. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12214>
- Fowler, S. (2018) *The Motivation to learn Online Questionnaire*. Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation. Graduate Faculty, The University of Georgia. Retrieved from https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/fowler_kevin_s_201805_phd.pdf
- Jackson, S.L. (2015) *Research methods and Statistics-A Critical Thinking Approach* (5th Edition) Boston, USA:: Cengage Learning.
- Mahyoob, M. (2020). Challenges of e-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic Experienced by EFL Learners. *Arab World English Journal*, 11(4), 351-362. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no4.23>
- Mazlifah, M., Rahmat, N. H., Sukimin, I. S., Sim, M. S., Anuar, M., & Mohandas, E. S. (2024). Understanding adult learners' motivation and preferences in online and distance programs in the post-COVID-19 era: A case study of the Institute of Continuing Education & Professional Studies. *International Journal on e-Learning and Higher Education*, 19(2), 143-168
- Medeiros, H. C. P., Soares, A. B., & Monteiro, M. C. (2021). Adolescent social skills, perception of social support and motivation to learn: the impact on school performance. *Psico-USF*, 26, 533-543.
- Meşe, E. & Sevilen, Ç. (2021). Factors influencing EFL students' motivation in online learning: A qualitative case study. *Journal of Educational Technology & Online Learning*, 4(1), 11-22.
- Minohara, S. M., & Musni, R. V. (2024). Impact of motivation and social support in online distance learning among freshmen. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 8(12), 3294. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). Postbaccalaureate Enrollment. Condition of Education. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/chb>
- Pozdnyakova, O., & Pozdnyakov, A. (2017). Adult Students' Problems in Distance Learning. *Procedia Engineering*, 178, 243-248. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proeng.2017.01.105>
- Rahmat, N. H., Sim, M. S., & Siok, T. H. (2024). Learning Mandarin Online: Is There A Relationship between Social Support with Expectancy and Value? *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 14(1), 1963-1985
- Rahmat, N. H. ., Sukimin, I. S. ., Sim, M. S. ., Anuar, M. ., & Mohandas, E. S. (2021). Online Learning Motivation and Satisfaction: A Case Study of Undergraduates vs Postgraduates. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 11(2), 88-97. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.1.2021.112.88.97>

- Safitri, P. R., Tumanggor, R. O., & Tasdin, W. (2021). Social support and learning motivation for new students during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Economics, Business, Social, and Humanities (ICEBSH 2021)*, 229-235. Retrieved from <https://www.atlantis-press.com/article/125959553.pdf>
- Sri, M. (2020). Online-Learning and Students' Motivation: A Research Study on the Effect of Online Learning on students' motivation in IAIN Padangsidempuan, IOC-TBI – The First International Conference of TBI, August, 13 th & 14 th
- Tareen, H. & Haand, M. T. (2020). A Case Study of UiTM Post-Graduate Students' Perceptions on Online Learning: Benefits & Challenges, *International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications* ISSN: 2456-9992
- Teo, K.M., Ho, S.T., (2024). Undergraduate students' motivation toward online learning and intention to enrol in future online courses. *Issues and perspectives in business and Social Sciences*, 4(2), 143-153. <https://journals.mmupress.com/index.php/ipbss/article/view/iss4vol2paper3/paper604>
- Yusop, H., Rosnan, S., Ismail, Z., Jaafar, N. H., Nurfazrina, & Wibowo, M. (2022). Motivation to Learn Online: The Case For Social Support. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(9), 1606 – 1627.
- Zhou, M., & Yu, S. (2023). The relationship between social support and academic engagement among adult learners in online education. *BMC Public Health*, 23, 301. <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-17301-3>
- Zhu, Y., Zhang, J.H., Au, W., Yates, G. (2020). University students' online learning attitudes and continuous intention to undertake online courses: A Self-Regulated Learning Perspective. *Education Tech Research Dev*, 68, 1485-1519 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09753-w>