
Situational Motivation and Participation in Online Discussions

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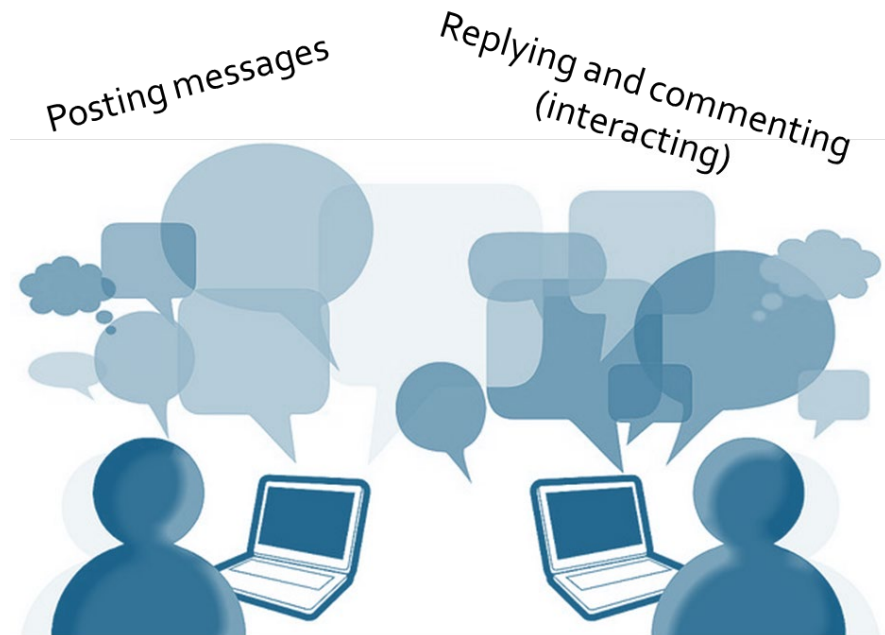
Online Discussions

- **Active participation**

- Post messages
- Comment/reply
- Engage in a dialogue

- **Passive participation**

- Read for modeling
- Read for commenting/replying
- Read for learning



Reading others' posts

Learner Motivation

- Fun & exciting
- Meaning & valuable
- **Useful & relevant**
- **Required for degree**
- **Self-respect (ego)**
- Boring & tedious
- Complex & difficult
- No sense of belonging/oothering



Intrinsic

Extrinsic

Amotivation

Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000)



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Situational Motivation

The motivation that individuals experience when they are ***currently engaging in an activity within a specific context.*** (e.g., situational interest, curiosity, etc.)

Generality

Three Levels of Motivation (Vallerand, 1997)

Global Level

Contextual Level

Situational Level

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how ***course design, online instructor's facilitation, and learning community*** related to students' ***situational motivation*** to actively participate in online discussions.



Course context

Situational motivation

Participation

Research Questions

The overarching questions that guided this study are:

1. How **course context** (e.g., course design, facilitation, peers) supports students' **basic psychological needs and intrinsic motivation**?
2. How does **different types of situational motivation** (e.g., intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation) **relate to active and passive participation**?

Methods

- 27 graduate students
 - 17 international
 - 10 domestic
- Semi-structured 1:1 Interview
- In person & video conference (Zoom)
- 3 interviewers (international)
- Cross-case study
- Thematic analysis

Demographic Information of Participants		
Nationality	Asia	9
	Europe/Middle East	5
	Central America	3
	North America (US)	10
Discipline	Education	18
	Information & Communication	4
	Social sciences/Public policy	4
	STEM	1

Findings: Course context on intrinsic motivation

Flexibility

- Option to choose discussion topics by interest
- Autonomy to share culturally different perspectives
- Flexible time for live session

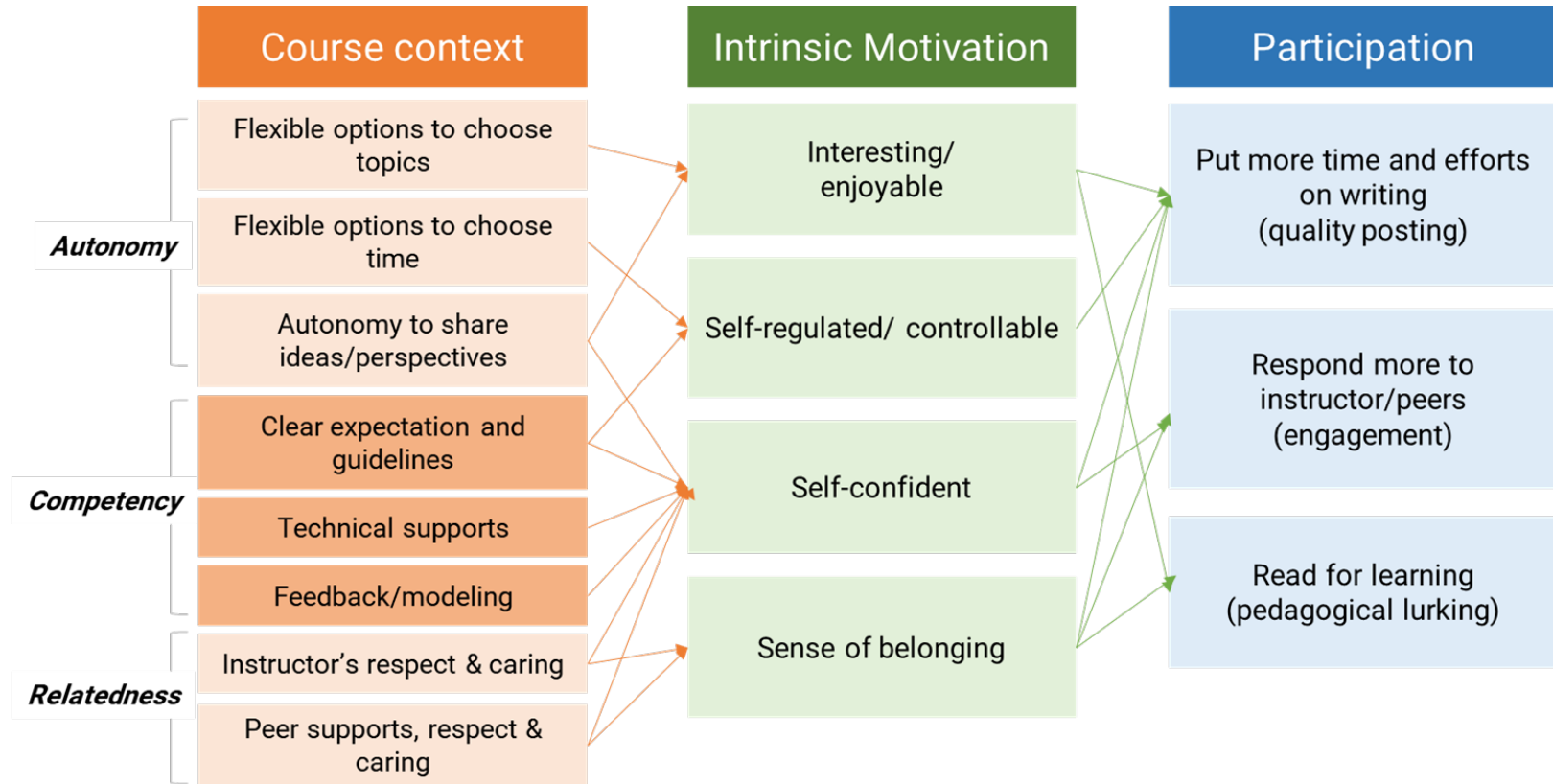
Competency & self-confidence

- Clear guidelines
- Feedback/modeling
- Discussion tools/technical supports
- Peer supports (e.g., proofread, Q&A)

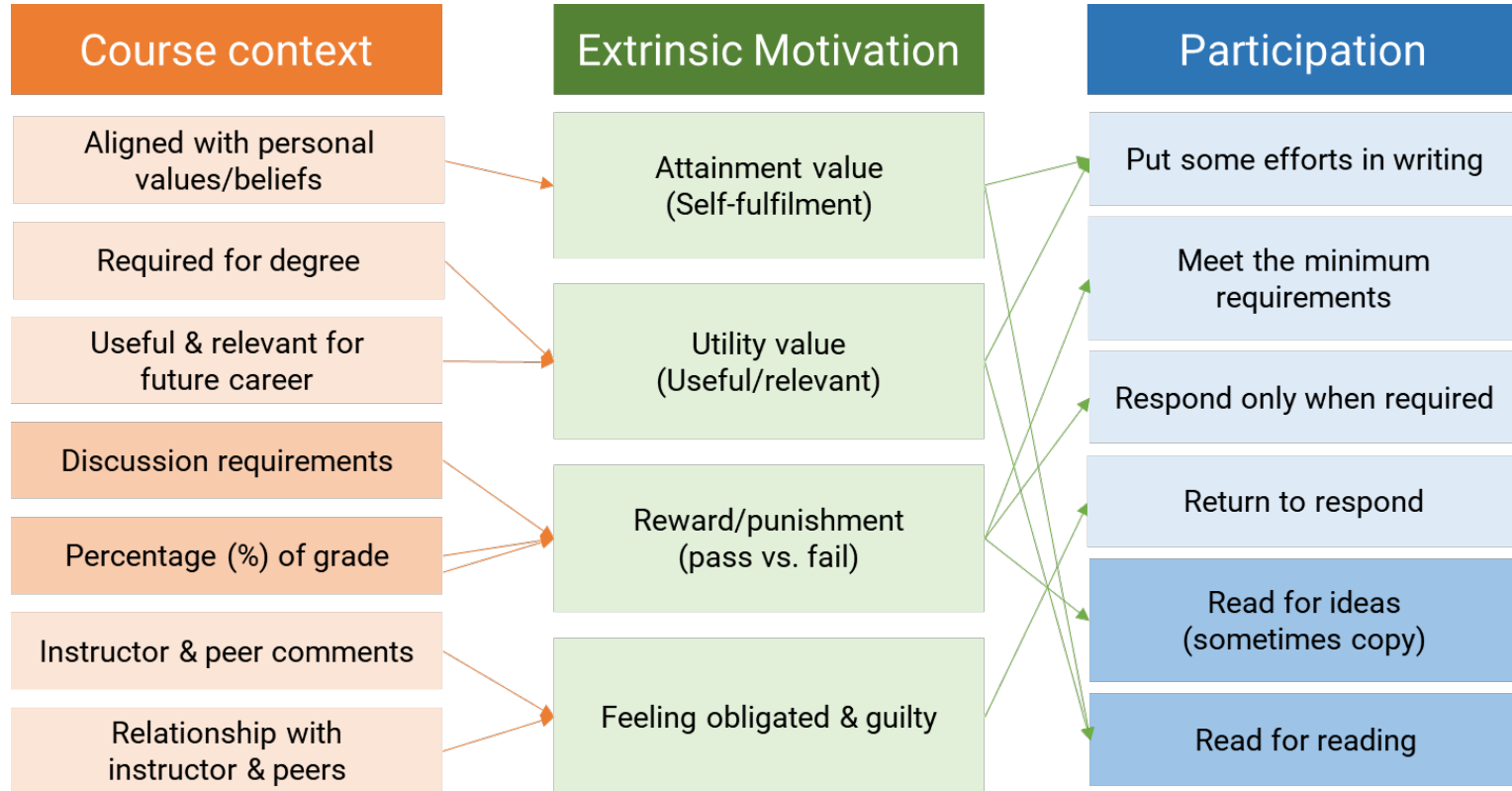
Belonging vs. Othering

- Peer attitude/supports
- Instructor attitude/facilitation
- **vs.**
- Stereotype & bias
- Microaggression
- Self-perception

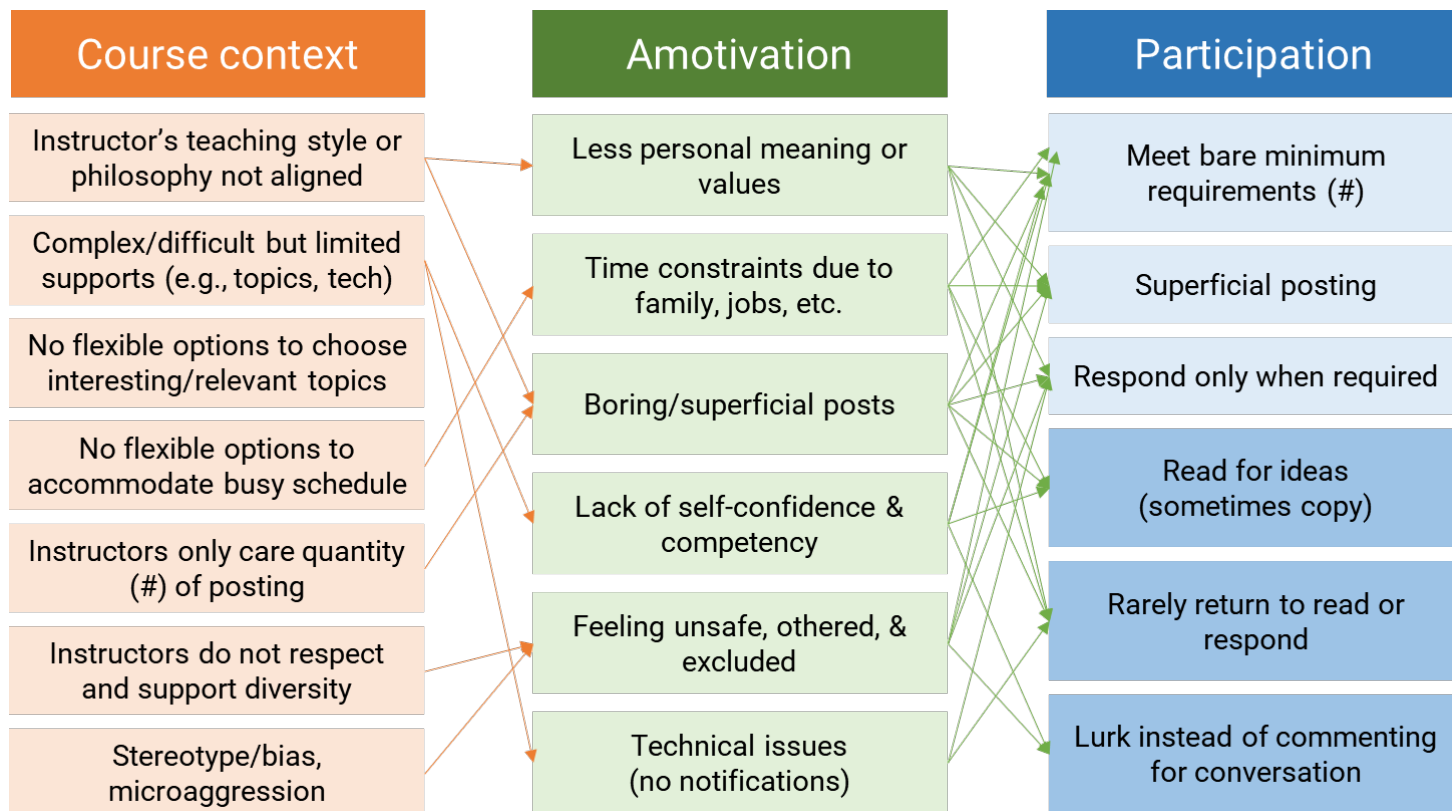
Findings: Intrinsic motivation on participation



Findings: Extrinsic motivation on participation



Findings: Amotivation on participation



Discussion & Conclusion

- Students participate in online discussion because it is required. However, they engage more if their **psychological needs are met and feel satisfied or excited** through the quality discussions.
 - **Clear guidelines and supports** from instructor/peers is **most important**. (Needs for feeling competent and self-confident)
 - **Feeling inclusive and valued** by instructor and peers are important. (Needs for social presence and belonging)
 - Flexible options to choose interesting topics creates **situational motivation**. (Needs for autonomy and controllability)

Discussion & Conclusion

- Therefore, understanding individual students' needs and **removing amotivation factors through course design and facilitation** are critical.
 - Instructional strategies to **enhance less competent students' self-confidence**
 - Create guidelines and expectation
 - Instructor's modeling and facilitation
 - Individual and/or group feedback from instructor/TAs
 - **Inclusive course design** for students with diverse backgrounds
 - Course **content and discussion topics** considering diverse learners
 - Ground rules to **create safe environment** for minority group of people
 - Instructional strategies to increase **situational interests and relevancy**
 - **Options to choose** course readings and discussion topics
 - **Options to suggest** discussion topics of students' choice

Discussion & Conclusion

- **Both active and passive forms of participation are important** as long as the quality of posting and reading are guaranteed.
 - Instructional design to **ensure the quality of posts** rather than the quantity
 - The quantity of posts can be easily obtained through discussion requirements
 - No genuine lurking exists in online discussions as long as discussion are required.
 - **Active lurking or pedagogical lurking for learning** before and after posting should be highly promoted.

Thank you for listening.

Any Questions?

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