

The Influence of Social Support in Online Learning Motivation

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ABSTRACT

The increasing use of online learning in higher education has highlighted the importance of understanding factors that influence learners' motivation. This study examines the role of social support in shaping learners' motivation, with a specific focus on expectancy and value. A quantitative survey was conducted using a structured instrument, involving 119 undergraduate students. Data were analysed using descriptive and correlational techniques. The results show that learners experience strong social support and demonstrate positive levels of expectancy and value, although confidence is slightly lower when dealing with more complex tasks. Significant positive relationships were found between social support and both expectancy and value, indicating that a supportive learning environment enhances learners' confidence and their perception of learning importance. These findings highlight the importance of integrating social and cognitive factors in designing more engaging online learning environments.

Keywords: online learning, motivation, social support, expectancy, value

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

The landscape of higher education has undergone significant transformation with the increasing adoption of online learning. This shift became more prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic, where institutions were required to transition rapidly to digital platforms, highlighting both the potential and challenges of online learning environments. As online learning continues to evolve, understanding the factors that influence students' engagement and persistence has become increasingly important.

Motivation in online learning can be explained through Expectancy-Value Theory, which suggests that learners' engagement is influenced by their expectancy for success and the value they assign to learning tasks (Eccles et al., 2020; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Expectancy reflects learners' confidence in their ability to succeed, while value relates to the perceived importance, usefulness, and interest of the task. These components influence learners' effort, engagement, and persistence in learning activities.

Despite the growing body of research on online learning, the relevance of this topic remains significant. The continuous advancement of digital learning technologies and the increasing diversity of learners require ongoing investigation into how social and cognitive factors influence motivation in online environments. Therefore, understanding the relationship between social support, expectancy, and value is essential in enhancing the effectiveness of online learning.

Statement of Problem

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of motivation in online learning, particularly in relation to student engagement, persistence, and learning outcomes. Research has shown that factors such as learning environment, interaction, and learner autonomy influence students' motivation in online settings (Vo et al., 2024;

Lee et al., 2022). In addition, studies based on Social Learning Theory emphasise the role of interaction and support in shaping learners' confidence and engagement (Li et al., 2023), while Expectancy-Value Theory highlights the importance of expectancy and value in influencing motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Eccles et al., 2020).

However, despite these findings, several issues remain. Students in online learning environments often experience feelings of isolation, disconnection from instructors and peers, and reduced engagement with learning activities, which may affect their motivation and persistence (Huang, 2023; Solhi, 2023). Although social support has been identified as an important factor in online learning, the specific ways in which it influences expectancy and value are still not clearly understood.

Recent studies have reported positive relationships between social support and motivational components in online learning. For example, Jenal et al. (2025) found significant positive relationships between social support, expectancy, and value, while Tahir et al. (2025) also reported that social support was positively associated with both expectancy and value dimensions among undergraduate students. Similarly, Vo et al. (2024) highlighted that expectancy and task value play mediating roles in online learning engagement.

While these studies provide valuable insights, a gap remains in understanding how social support specifically influences expectancy and value as distinct motivational components. This is important because expectancy beliefs and value beliefs represent different aspects of motivation and may respond differently to social support. Recent literature has also recommended further investigation into the specific pathways linking social support with expectancy and value in online learning contexts (Jenal et al., 2025; Gaspard et al., 2025; Lee et al., 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the relationship between social support and learners' motivation, focusing specifically on expectancy and value. This will provide a clearer understanding of how social and cognitive factors interact in influencing motivation in online learning.

Objective of the Study and Research Questions

This study is done to explore the influence of social support on online learning motivation among university students. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

- RQ1-How do learners perceive their social support in online learning?
- RQ2-How do learners perceive their expectancy in online learning?
- RQ3-How do learners perceive their value in online learning?
- RQ4-Is there a significant relationship between social support and expectancy?

H1- There is no significant relationship between social support and expectancy.

- RQ5-Is there a significant relationship between social support and value?

H2-There is no significant relationship between social support and value.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Social Learning Theory by Bandura and Online Learning

Social Learning Theory, introduced by Bandura, views learning as a process that takes place through interaction with other people and the surrounding environment (Bandura, 1977). Rather than learning only from direct instruction, individuals observe how others behave, interpret the consequences of those behaviours, and then decide whether to imitate them.

In this framework, personal factors, actions, and environmental conditions influence one another continuously. A central concept in the theory is self-efficacy, or the belief that one is capable of successfully carrying out a

task. Learners with stronger self-efficacy are generally more willing to face academic challenges, persist when work is difficult, and stay engaged in their studies (Hodges, 2008; Wang & Zhang, 2024).

In online learning settings, where physical interaction is limited, this social component is created through digital tools such as discussion forums, group activities, and instructor feedback channels. These tools allow students to observe peers, receive guidance, and model effective learning behaviours (Hill et al., 2009; Mbat, 2013; Li et al., 2023). Previous research has shown that visible instructor presence and active peer participation help to support motivation and improve outcomes in online courses (Restiano, 2015; Sokman et al., 2022). For this reason, Social Learning Theory provides a useful lens for understanding how social support in online environments can strengthen students' confidence and engagement.

Expectancy-Value Theory of Motivation

Expectancy-Value Theory, developed by Eccles and Wigfield, explains students' motivation through two main beliefs: how likely they think they are to succeed and how much they value the task itself (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Expectancy refers to learners' judgments about their chances of doing well in a particular activity, while value captures how interesting, important, or useful they consider that activity to be (Wigfield, 1994).

Task value consists of intrinsic value, attainment value, utility value, and cost, which represent learners' interest, personal importance, perceived usefulness, and the effort or challenges associated with a task (Eccles et al., 2020). These components influence learners' motivation, engagement, and persistence in learning activities.

In online learning environments, Expectancy-Value Theory is particularly relevant as students are required to be more independent and self-directed. Learners who have higher expectancy are more likely to engage actively, while those who perceive higher value in the learning tasks are more likely to sustain their effort and interest. Previous studies have shown that expectancy and value are significant predictors of learning persistence and engagement in online learning settings (Lee et al., 2022; Lin, 2021).

Past Studies

Past Studies on Motivation for Online Learning

Research on online learning has widely examined learners' motivation, particularly in relation to engagement and learning experiences. Existing studies emphasise that both individual and contextual factors contribute to shaping learners' motivation.

Ferrer et al. (2020) investigated motivation and engagement among undergraduate students in higher education, focusing on attitudes towards online learning. The study involved 574 business students in Australia and applied the Academic Motivation Scale together with structural equation modelling. The results showed that attitudes towards online learning acted as a mediator between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and student engagement. In addition, amotivation was found to negatively affect engagement, especially among online learners. These findings highlight the importance of fostering positive learning attitudes to support student motivation.

Similarly, Huang et al. (2019) examined motivation in virtual learning environments using Self-Determination Theory and hedonic theory. Based on survey data analysed through structural equation modelling in a 3D virtual context, the study found that psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness, along with enjoyment and immersion, significantly influenced motivation. This suggests that both psychological and experiential elements are important in enhancing learners' motivation in digital learning environments.

In another study, Yong and Thi (2022) examined online learning motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic using a mixed-methods design involving 535 undergraduate students from public and private higher education institutions in Malaysia. Using questionnaire data analysed with SPSS and AMOS SEM, the study found that learning environment and learner-instructor interaction significantly influenced students' motivation, while self-efficacy did not show a direct effect. These findings suggest that external and relational factors, particularly

instructor support and learning conditions, play a more important role than individual factors in shaping motivation during unplanned online learning.

Song and Bonk (2016) also examined motivational factors in self-directed informal learning using online resources. Their study, which involved participants from various online learning platforms, found that motivation was strongly influenced by learner autonomy, freedom of choice, and personal interest. These findings highlight the importance of intrinsic motivation in sustaining engagement in informal online learning contexts.

Overall, previous studies demonstrate that motivation in online learning is influenced by multiple factors, including attitudes, learning environments, psychological needs, and learner autonomy. While these studies provide valuable insights, they primarily focus on general motivational factors and learning experiences. Less attention has been given to understanding how specific elements such as social support influence distinct motivational components, particularly expectancy and value. This suggests the need for further investigation into how social and cognitive factors interact to shape learners' motivation in online learning environments.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. This study explores how social support influences online learning motivation. Specifically, this study looks at the relationship between social support and expectancy. It also looks at the influence of social support on value. According to Fowler (2018), for students to be motivated to learn online, they need social support, expectancy and value. In online learning, expectancy refers to the learner's belief that their learning would be successful. Next, when learners put value in their online learning, they expect flexibility in their quest for learning. Online learning can sometimes make the learners they need connection (Rahmat, 2025). This connection is made possible when the learners feel they could still engage with their instructors and their peers. This study investigates if there is a significant relationship between social support and components such as expectancy and value in online learning.

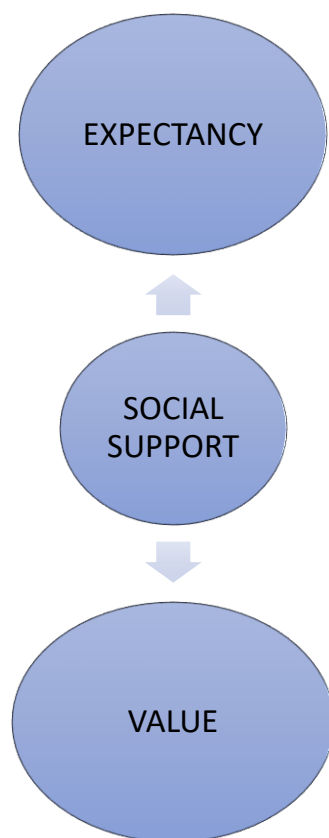


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study

The influence of social support in online learning motivation

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is done to explore the influence of social support in online learning. A convenient sample of 119 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from Fowler (2018) to reveal the variables in table 3 below. Table 1 below shows the categories used for the Likert scale; 1 is Never, 2 is for Seldom, 3 is for Sometimes 4 is for Often and 5 is Almost Always.

Table 1- Likert Scale Use

Likert Scale to Be Used

1	Never
2	Seldom
3	Sometimes
4	Often
5	Almost Always

Table 2- Distribution of Items in the Survey

SECTION	VARIABLE MOTIVATION	CONSTRUCT	NO OF ITEMS		CA
B	EXPECTANCY	Self-Efficacy	7	11	.893
		Control of Learning Beliefs	4		
C	VALUE	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	4	14	.899
		Extrinsic Goal Orientation	4		
		Task Value	6		
D	SOCIAL SUPPORT	Social Engagement	5	12	.861
		Instructor Support	7		
				37	.942

Table 2 presents the distribution of survey items. Section B has 11 items on Expectancy. Section C has 14 items on Value, and Section D has 12 items on Social Support.

Table 3- Reliability Levels, Cronbach's Alpha Ranges, and Their Interpretations

Reliability Level	Cronbach's Alpha range	Interpretation
Excellent	0.9 and above	Indicates very high internal consistency
Good	0.80-0.89	Reflects strong internal consistency
Acceptable	0.70-0.79	Indicates acceptable internal consistency
Questionable	0.60-0.69	Reflects questionable internal consistency
Poor	Below 0.6	Indicates poor internal consistency

In order to determine the internal reliability of the instrument, a reliability analysis is conducted. Table 3 above shows the distribution and interpretation of the Cronbach Alpha range. According to Ahmad,et.al. (2024), Cronbach Alpha scores between 0.7 to 0.9 is considered acceptable to excellent.

Table 2 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .893 for expectancy, .899 for value and .861 for social support. The overall Cronbach alpha for all 37 item is .942; 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

Demographic Analysis

Demographic data are commonly reported using percentages to provide a clear representation of the sample characteristics (Zienefuss et al., 2021). The reporting also provides an overview of participants' characteristics. Percentages offer a clear and understandable picture of the sample makeup.

Table 4- Percentage for Demographic Profile

Question	Demographic Profile	Categories	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	42%
		Female	58%
2	Cluster	Science & Technology	50%
		Social Sciences & Humanities	50%

Table 4 summarises the demographic profile of the respondents. In terms of gender, the majority were female (58%) compared to male (42%). For academic cluster, the respondents were equally distributed, with 50% from Science and Technology and 50% from Social Sciences and Humanities. These findings indicate a balanced representation across fields of study.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation are used to summarise the data and show response patterns (Vetter, 2017). A low SD means the data points are clustered close to the mean while a high SD indicates they are more spread out. It is good to have a high SD.

Findings for Social Support

This section presents data to answer the research question- RQ1-How do learners perceive their social support in online learning? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) social engagement, (ii) instructor support.

Table 5- Mean and Standard Deviation for Social Engagement (SSE)

Statement	Mean	SD
SSEQ1 feel "disconnected" from my teacher and fellow students in classes.	2.22	1.16
SSEQ2I pay attention in classes.	4.01	0.74
SSEQ3I enjoy class discussions.	4.18	0.66
SSEQ4I feel like I can freely communicate with other students in classes.	4.10	0.76
SSEQ5I have strong relationships with fellow students in this course.	4.08	0.84

Table 5 shows the mean scores for social engagement. The highest mean is for item SSEQ3 (Mean = 4.18, SD = 0.66), which indicates that learners enjoy class discussions. This is followed by SSEQ4 (Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.76) and SSEQ5 (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.84), showing that learners feel comfortable communicating and have good relationships with peers. The lowest mean is SSEQ1 (Mean = 2.22, SD = 1.16), indicating that learners generally do not feel disconnected in class.

Table 6- Mean and Standard Deviation for Instructor Support (SIS)

Statement	Mean	SD
SISQ1I feel like I can freely communicate with the instructor in this class.	4.13	0.76
SISQ2 The instructor responds to questions, clearly, completely, and in a timely manner.	4.34	0.66
SISQ3 The instructor's expectations for me in this class are clear.	4.20	0.70
SISQ4 The instructor provides the guidance I need to be successful in this class.	4.29	0.73
SISQ5 The instructor presents the material in a way that makes it relevant to me.	4.31	0.72

SISQ6 In this course, I have the freedom to guide my own learning	4.24	0.69
SISQ7 The instructor provides regular feedback that helps me gauge my performance in this class.	4.29	0.68

Table 6 presents the mean scores for instructor support. The highest mean is for item SISQ2 (Mean = 4.34, SD = 0.66), indicating that instructors respond clearly and promptly. This is followed by SISQ5 (Mean = 4.31, SD = 0.72) and SISQ4/SISQ7 (Mean = 4.29), showing strong support and feedback from instructors. The lowest mean is SISQ1 (Mean = 4.13, SD = 0.76), although it still reflects a high level of agreement.

Findings for Expectancy

This section presents data to answer the research question- RQ2-How do learners perceive their expectancy in online learning? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i)self-efficacy, (ii) control of learning beliefs,

Table 7- Mean and Standard Deviation for SELF-EFFICACY (ESE)

Statement	Mean	SD
ESEQ 1 I believe I'll receive excellent grades in my classes.	3.71	0.69
ESEQ2I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings.	3.62	0.76
ESEQ3 I'm confident I can learn the basic concepts that are being taught.	4.08	0.68
ESEQ4 I'm confident I can understand the most complex material presented by the instructor online.	3.59	0.79
ESEQ5 I'm confident I can do an excellent job on assessments online	3.91	0.72
ESEQ6 I'm certain I can master the skills being taught online.	3.68	0.80
ESEQ7 Although online classes can be challenging, I think I can do well	3.88	0.80

Table 7 shows the mean scores for self-efficacy. The highest mean is for item ESEQ3 (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.68), indicating that learners are confident in understanding basic concepts. This is followed by ESEQ5 (Mean = 3.91, SD = 0.72) and ESEQ7 (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.80). The lowest mean is ESEQ4 (Mean = 3.59, SD = 0.79), showing lower confidence in understanding complex material.

(ii) Table 8- Mean and Standard Deviation for CONTROL OF LEARNING BELIEFS (ECB)

Statement	Mean	SD
ECBQ1 If I study in appropriate ways, then I'll be able to learn the material.	3.96	0.80
ECBQ2 It's my own fault if I don't learn the material taught.	3.90	0.86
ECBQ3 If I try hard enough, then I'll understand the material presented.	4.13	0.71
ECBQ4 If I don't understand the material presented, it's because I didn't try hard enough.	3.91	0.85

Table 8 presents the mean scores for control of learning beliefs. The highest mean is ECBQ3 (Mean = 4.13, SD = 0.71), indicating that learners believe effort leads to understanding. This is followed by ECBQ1 (Mean = 3.96, SD = 0.80). The lowest mean is ECBQ2 (Mean = 3.90, SD = 0.86), although the difference is minimal across items.

Findings for Value

This section presents data to answer the research question- RQ3-How do learners perceive their value in online learning? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) intrinsic goal orientation, (ii) extrinsic goal orientation, and(iii) task value.

Table 9- Mean and Standard Deviation for Intrinsic Goal Orientation (VI)

Statement	Mean	SD
VIQ1 I prefer online material that really challenges me, so I can learn new things.	3.47	0.84
VIQ2 I prefer online material that arouses my curiosity, even if it's difficult to learn.	3.55	0.81
VIQ3 The most satisfying thing for me is trying to understand the online content as thoroughly as possible.	3.66	0.77
VIQ4 I choose assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade.	3.65	0.74

Table 9 shows the mean scores for intrinsic goal orientation. The highest mean is VIQ3 (Mean = 3.66, SD = 0.77), indicating that learners value understanding the content. This is followed by VIQ4 (Mean = 3.65, SD = 0.74). The lowest mean is VIQ1 (Mean = 3.47, SD = 0.84), showing slightly lower preference for challenging materials.

Table 10- Mean and Standard Deviation for Extrinsic Goal Orientation(VE)

Statement	Mean	SD
VEQ1 Getting a good grade is the most satisfying thing for me.	4.42	0.76
VEQ2 I want to do well in my classes so that I can get awards and recognition.	4.17	0.82
VEQ3 I want to get better grades than most of the other students in my classes.	4.16	0.80
VEQ4 I want to do well in my classes because it's important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others.	4.33	0.73

Table 10 presents the mean scores for extrinsic goal orientation. The highest mean is VEQ1 (Mean = 4.42, SD = 0.76), indicating that getting good grades is highly important. This is followed by VEQ4 (Mean = 4.33, SD = 0.73). The lowest mean is VEQ3 (Mean = 4.16, SD = 0.80), though all items show high agreement.

Table 11- Mean and Standard Deviation for Task Value (VT)

Statement	Mean	SD
VTQ1I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in other courses.	3.94	0.75
VTQ2It is important for me to learn the course material in this class.	4.15	0.68
VTQ3I am very interested in the content area of this course.	3.99	0.76
VTQ4I think the course material in this class is useful for me to learn.	4.07	0.73
VTQ5I like the subject matter of this course.	4.03	0.74
VTQ6 Understanding the subject matter of this course is very important to me.	4.16	0.69

Table 11 shows the mean scores for task value. The highest mean is VTQ6 (Mean = 4.16, SD = 0.69), indicating that understanding the subject matter is very important. This is followed by VTQ2 (Mean = 4.15, SD = 0.68). The lowest mean is VTQ1 (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.75), although overall perceptions remain positive.

Exploratory Statistics

According to He (2024), correlation is a statistical technique that shows how strongly two variables are related to each other or the degree of association between the two. It's a common tool for describing simple relationships without making a statement about cause and effect. This section presents data to answer research question on correlation.

Findings for the Relationship between social support and expectancy

This section presents data to answer the research question- RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between social support and expectancy?

H1- There is no significant relationship between social support and expectancy. To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between social support and expectancy, data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in Table 12 below.

Table 12- Correlation between Social Support and Expectancy Components

		SOCIAL SUPORT	EXPECTANCY
SOCIAL SUPPORT	Pearson (Correlation	1	.608**
	Sig (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	119	119
EXPECTANCY	Pearson (Correlation	.608**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	119	119

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

Table 12 shows there is an association between social support and expectancy components. Correlation analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between social support and expectancy ($r = .608$) and ($p=.000$). This indicates that higher levels of social support are associated with greater confidence among learners in their ability to succeed. According to He (2024), 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.

Findings for Relationship between social support and value

This section presents data to answer the research question- RQ5-Is there a significant relationship between social support and value?

H2-There is no significant relationship between social support and value.

To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between social support and value, data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in Table 13 below.

Table 13- Correlation between Social Support and Expectancy Components

		SOCIAL SUPORT	VALUE
SOCIAL SUPPORT	Pearson (Correlation	1	.666**
	Sig (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	119	119
VALUE	Pearson (Correlation	.666**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	119	119

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

Table 13 shows there is an association between social support and value components. A strong positive relationship is also observed between social support and value ($r = .666$) and ($p=.000$). This suggests that when learners receive greater support, they are more likely to perceive their learning as meaningful and worthwhile. Correlation coefficients are considered significant at the .05 level, and the strength of the relationship can be interpreted using a scale ranging from 0.1 to 1.0 (He, 2024). Values between 0.5 and 1.0 represent a strong positive relationship, confirming that the association observed in this study is strong.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussions

This study examined learners' motivation in online learning by focusing on social support, expectancy, and value. Specifically, the study explored learners' perceptions of these factors and the relationships between social support and the motivational components of expectancy and value. The findings are presented and discussed according to the research questions.

RQ1: How do learners perceive their social support in online learning?

The findings indicate that learners generally perceive a high level of social support in online learning. Instructor support is particularly evident through clear guidance, timely feedback, and the use of appropriate learning materials. In addition, peer interaction contributes to a supportive and engaging learning environment, where learners feel comfortable exchanging ideas and assisting one another.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the importance of interaction in online learning. Ferrer et al. (2020) and Huang et al. (2019) emphasised that engagement and motivation are influenced by interaction and learning experience. Similarly, Song and Bonk (2016) found that learner autonomy and interaction contribute to sustained motivation in online environments. This suggests that both instructor and peer support play an important role in enhancing learners' motivation.

Summary by answering all RQ (no mean scores) and relate to past studies

RQ2: How do learners perceive their expectancy in online learning?

The findings show that learners generally demonstrate positive expectancy, indicating confidence in their ability to understand learning materials and perform well in online tasks. Learners appear more confident when dealing with basic concepts, while slightly lower confidence is observed when engaging with more complex materials.

This finding aligns with Expectancy-Value Theory, which suggests that learners' belief in their ability to succeed influences their engagement and persistence (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). It indicates that while learners are generally confident, additional support may be required when tasks become more demanding.

RQ3: How do learners perceive their value in online learning?

The findings reveal that learners have positive perceptions of value in online learning, particularly in terms of extrinsic goal orientation and task value. Learners perceive online learning as useful and important, especially in achieving academic goals and future outcomes. However, slightly lower responses are observed in intrinsic goal orientation, suggesting that learners may be less driven by interest compared to external rewards.

These findings are consistent with previous studies which suggest that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence motivation in online learning environments (Huang et al., 2019; Song & Bonk, 2016). This indicates that while learners recognise the importance of online learning, fostering intrinsic motivation remains a challenge.

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between social support and expectancy?

The findings show a strong and significant positive relationship between social support and expectancy ($r = .608$). This indicates that higher levels of social support are associated with higher levels of learners' confidence in their ability to succeed in online learning.

This finding supports previous studies which reported that social interaction and support contribute to learners' confidence and engagement (Jenal et al., 2025; Tahir et al., 2025). It also reflects the principles of Social Learning Theory, where interaction within a social environment enhances learners' self-efficacy and motivation.

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between social support and value?

The findings also reveal a strong and significant positive relationship between social support and value ($r = .666$). This suggests that learners who experience higher levels of social support are more likely to perceive learning tasks as meaningful and valuable.

This finding is consistent with previous research which highlights that social support plays an important role in shaping learners' motivation and engagement (Vo et al., 2024; Jenal et al., 2025). It indicates that a supportive learning environment not only enhances confidence but also strengthens learners' perception of the importance and usefulness of learning.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Theoretical and Conceptual Implications

The findings of this study provide support for the integration of Social Learning Theory and Expectancy-Value Theory in explaining learners' motivation in online learning environments. The significant relationships between social support, expectancy, and value suggest that learners' motivation is shaped through both social interaction and cognitive beliefs.

From a conceptual perspective, the findings reinforce the idea that motivation in online learning is not solely an individual process but is influenced by the surrounding learning environment. Social support, particularly from instructors and peers, appears to play a central role in strengthening learners' confidence and their perception of task importance. This aligns with the principles of Social Learning Theory, where interaction and social engagement contribute to learning (Li et al., 2023), as well as Expectancy-Value Theory, which emphasises the role of belief and perceived value in driving motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Eccles et al., 2020).

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study highlight several important considerations for teaching practices in online learning environments. Given the strong influence of social support on both expectancy and value, instructors should prioritise the creation of a supportive and interactive learning environment. First, instructors should maintain consistent communication and provide timely, constructive feedback to enhance learners' confidence in completing online tasks. Clear instructions and structured guidance are essential in helping learners navigate online learning effectively, as supported by previous studies highlighting the importance of instructional support in online learning environments (Li et al., 2023; Huang, 2023).

Second, the role of peer interaction should be strengthened through the incorporation of collaborative learning activities such as group discussions, peer feedback, and team-based tasks. These strategies have been shown to enhance engagement and motivation in online learning (Huang et al., 2019; Song & Bonk, 2016).

Third, learning activities should be designed to highlight relevance and real-world application in order to strengthen learners' perception of value. When learners recognise the usefulness of what they are learning, they are more likely to remain motivated and engaged, consistent with the principles of Expectancy-Value Theory which emphasise the role of task value in influencing motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Eccles et al., 2020).

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations for future research are proposed. Future studies may adopt a mixed-methods approach to gain deeper insights into learners' experiences, particularly in understanding how social support influences motivation at a more detailed level.

In addition, future research could expand the sample to include learners from different disciplines, institutions, or levels of study to improve the generalisability of the findings. Comparative studies may also be conducted to examine differences across learner groups.

Finally, future studies may explore additional variables that could influence learners' motivation in online learning, such as self-regulated learning, digital literacy, and instructional design. Examining these factors alongside social support, expectancy, and value may provide a more comprehensive understanding of motivation in online learning environments.

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