

# Internal and External Predictors of Online Work Motivation

Lauren Chow  
Psychology Major

California Lutheran  
UNIVERSITY

Dr. Marylie Gerson  
Sponsoring Faculty  
Department of Psychology

## Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine how internal and external predictors are associated with online work motivation. In a multiple regression designed study, 70 participants who worked primarily online were asked to rate their job satisfaction, passion for work, the amount of social interaction they had online, and recent motivation levels. As hypothesized, satisfaction, passion, and social interaction positively and significantly predicted motivation for online work. Contrary to predictions, social interaction was not the strongest predictor for work motivation, but it was a strong one. Findings from the study could be relevant to gaining a better understanding on online work motivation and creating strategies to increase work efficiency.

## Introduction

Individuals need a sense of satisfaction in order to perform efficiently at work (Foulk et al., 2019). If workers can help others, perform tasks well, and feel a sense of power in their work, they will be motivated to continue performing well. Since people are working online due to the Coronavirus, how does this change satisfaction and motivational levels? Pradhan et al. (2017) suggested passion has a positive relationship with work motivation. If a person enjoys their job or feels a sense of purpose, then they will be more motivated to perform efficiently in the workplace. Do passion levels influence a person's motivation when working online? Social interaction is an external motivational factor. According to Foulk et al. (2019), being in a social environment where individuals can engage with others helps with satisfaction and motivation to work. When working online, people feel disconnected and isolated, which was the primary factor that made workers stop doing effective work (Wang et al., 2019). How does the lack of social interaction in the workplace influence online work motivation during the Coronavirus?

Please contact Lauren Chow for more information at lchow@callutheran.edu.

## Hypotheses

It was predicted that satisfaction, passion, and social interaction will positively and significantly predict motivation for online work. Social interaction was predicted to be the strongest predictor for work motivation.

## Method

### Participants

- 70 undergraduate students at California Lutheran University and adults from social media
- 50% White, 6.1% African Am., 21.2% Asian, 12.1% Hispanic, 1.5% Native Am., 9.1% Other.
- 83.3% female, 15.2% male, and 1.5% non-binary
- 18 – 65 years of age ( $M = 28.66$ ,  $SD = 14.08$ )

### Materials

- Informed Consent Form
- Work-related Basic Need Satisfaction Scale (Van den Broeck et al., 2010)
- Work Passion Scale (Johri et al., 2016)
- Multidimensional Work Motivational Scale (Gagné et al., 2015)
- Attention Check
- Motivation Scale
- Demographic questionnaire

### Procedure

1. Participants clicked the survey link and signed consent form.
2. Participants reported job satisfaction and passion for work. Participants completed an attention check.
3. Participants reported social interaction at work and how motivated they felt recently.
4. Participants reported their demographic information.
5. Participants were thanked and exited the study.

## Results

- All predictors had significant and positive correlations with online work motivation
  - Satisfaction:  $r(65) = .50$ ,  $p < .001$
  - Passion:  $r(66) = .62$ ,  $p < .001$
  - Social interaction:  $r(66) = .58$ ,  $p < .001$

• Passion was the strongest predictor of online work motivation, followed by social interaction then satisfaction (passion: unstandardized Beta = .03,  $SE = .01$ ; standardized Beta = .41;  $t = 3.29$ ,  $p = .002$ ; social interaction: unstandardized Beta = .05,  $SE = .02$ ; standardized Beta = .36;  $t = 3.38$ ,  $p = .001$ ; satisfaction: unstandardized Beta = .02,  $SE = .03$ ; standardized Beta = .09;  $t = .75$ ,  $p = .46$ ;  $F(3, 59) = 21.22$ ,  $p < .001$ , overall  $R^2 = .52$ , with a large effect).



## Discussion

Satisfaction, passion, and social interaction are likely to influence a person's online work motivation. A person's passion for their work was the strongest predictor of online work motivation. However, all variables were strong predictors of online work motivation.

Limitations of this study include:

- Emotional disturbances not taken into consideration during the Coronavirus pandemic (i.e. depression, stress, etc.)
- Different time frames of the pandemic could influence motivation
- Worker's performance not measured
- Self-reported

Future research should address the above issues and analyze how a person's interest or passion for their work can be used to increase online work motivation. This can include running online programs that measure a person's interest, motivation, and effective work performance. However, since all the variables were strong predictors, future studies may want to explore whether one variable is more important than another.

References are available upon request.