

What motivates an academic coach in an online accelerated course? Using a qualitative approach

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“You know that moment when a student to get that light bulb to come on? When something you say, or an example you give.. When they say ‘okay, I get it now’.. I eventually came to realize that’s what motivates me. Helping people understand information that they didn’t before.”

-#5-

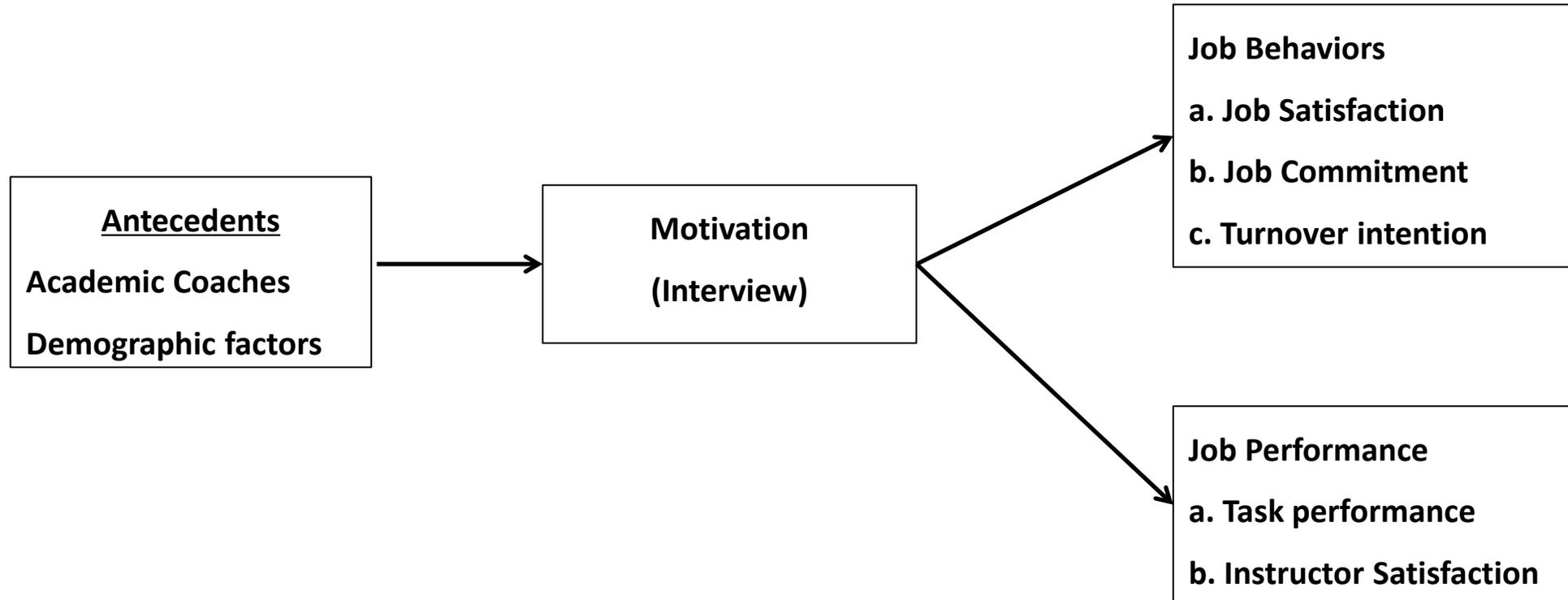
Introduction

- High demands in online education
- Teaching assistants (i.e., academic coaches) play a critical role in online courses
- A large number of students, an accelerated online class requires intensive work
- It can be challenging for academic coaches to feel motivated to perform well
 - Limited incentive, other demands (e.g., full-time job, study, etc.)
- What motivates academic coaches to work hard for good quality online education for students?

Research Motivation

- A. What are the different types of motivation that academic coaches have?
- B. How are the different types of motivation influences academic coaches job behaviors and job performance?

Research Model



Literature Review

- Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000, Gagne & Deci, 2005): Underlying regulatory process and related behavioral outcomes are different based on different motivations
 - Autonomous motivation – intrinsic motivation
 - Controlled motivation – extrinsic motivation
 - Externally regulated – initiated and maintained by contingencies external to the person
 - People act with the intention of obtaining a desired consequence or avoiding an undesired one.
 - Internalization – External regulation of behavior is transformed into an internal regulation, so external contingency no longer requires.
 - The more fully it has been internalized, the more autonomous will be the subsequent, extrinsically motivated behavior.

Literature Review

- Three different processes in internalization (Autonomy continuum)
 - Introjection – the regulation is controlling the person. (e.g., pressures people to behave in order to feel worthy, relatively controlled form of internalized extrinsic motivation)
 - Identification – people identify with the value of a behavior for their own self-selected goals. (e.g. behavior is more congruent with personal goals and identities)
 - Integration – the fullest type of internalization. (e.g., behavior is an integral part of who they are)
 - Integration is still extrinsic motivation because the activity is “instrumentally” important for personal goals.
- Intrinsic motivation – Interest and enjoyment of the task

Literature Review

- Prosocial motivation (Grant, 2008, pp.48-49)
 - The desire to expend effort to benefit other people
 - When prosocially motivated,
 - (a) employees are more likely to “push” themselves toward completing their work as a state of introjected or identified regulation
 - (b) employees are outcome focused – they see the work as a means to the end goal of benefiting others
 - (c) Employees are future focused – they are concerned with achieving a meaningful outcome upon completing the work.

Method

Study 1: Qualitative approach, Interview content analysis

- Conducted Interviews
- Analyze responses to interview questions to identify commonalities
- Developed categories to understand different types of motivation.

Study 2: Survey

- Survey items developed based on the interview findings
- Will be conducted by early May.

Study 1 Method

Interview participation:

40 signed up- 26 participated (about 30 minutes WebEx interview)

Motivation Interview questions:

- Why did you start work as an academic coach?
- What will give you more motivation to work as an academic coach?
- What makes you want to stay and work as an academic coach?

Total 14,708 words for the content analysis

Study 1 Results – Academic Coaches’ Different motivations

Extrinsic motivation		Total
Justification	Sub-categories & Example Comments	
External regulation	<u>Financial reason: Need extra money</u> <i>“It’s a good supplement to my income because I am at a small university, and they don’t pay well, and I’m a single mom.” (#10)</i>	15 (57%)
	<u>Work environment: Working online</u> <i>“It was just another way of working online.” (#16)</i>	3 (12%)
	<u>Work environment: Flexibility</u> <i>“The opportunity that this gives me for the flexibility for my family for over the last several years, it’s far a tradeoff.” (#22)</i>	5 (19%)
	<u>Work environment: Less responsibility</u> <i>“It allowed me to still teach without having that full time responsibility of being a lead instructor.” (#14)</i>	4 (15%)

Study 1 Results – Academic Coaches’ Different motivations (cont.)

Extrinsic motivation		Total
Justification	Sub-categories & Example Comments	
Identified regulation	<p><u>Self-growth: Learning online education</u> <i>“There’s also the opportunity for me to see how other classes are taught and learn some skills, or has a course design with... the more I’m exposed to, the better my course designs are for the future.” (#6)</i></p>	7 (27%)
	<p><u>Self-growth: Experience in the field</u> <i>“I’m trying to get in to the education sector of nursing. So, I kind of just wanted to get my feet wet in that area.” (#11)</i></p>	12 (46%)
	<p><u>Self-growth: Build up relationship with faculty</u> <i>“It puts me in different universities... I get the chance to talk to and interact with incredible professors... the guy that I worked with is a book author.. amazingly brilliant people.” (#17)</i></p>	4 (15%)
	<p><u>Self-growth: Stay in the field</u> <i>“It was just the idea of getting back to that teaching role.” (#7)</i></p>	14 (54%)
	<p><u>Self-growth: Transition and stepping stone</u> <i>“I use this job as a stepping stone and to demonstrate that I had some online teaching type of responsibilities in order to get another position that was online.” (#13)</i></p>	13 (50%)

Study 1 Results – Academic Coaches’ Different motivations (cont.)

Extrinsic motivation		Total
Justification	Sub-categories & Example Comments	
Integrated regulation	<u>Personal value: Use my skill</u> <i>“I’m using my expertise in something I’ve done all of my life,” (#2)</i>	7 (27%)
	<u>Personal value: Passion</u> <i>“I will say when I was younger, I always had a passion for teaching... something I have a passion about.” (#1)</i>	3 (12%)

Study 1 Results – Academic Coaches’ Different motivations (cont.)

Intrinsic motivation		Total
Justification	Sub-categories & Example Comments	
Autonomous motivation	<p><u>Enjoyment: enjoy work itself</u> <i>“And I honestly enjoy working with students, especially in the pediatric primary care class because that’s what I do every day. So, I enjoy answering their questions.” (#19)</i></p>	16 (62%)
	<p><u>Enjoyment: enjoy work with students</u> <i>“I enjoy dealing with them because they’ve got questions that I can answer in their learning process” (#4)</i></p>	18 (69%)
	<p><u>Enjoyment: enjoy work with faculty</u> <i>“I’ve had a really good experience at coaching because I’m working with instructors that I like .. that treat me respectfully.. that treat me as part of the team.” (#10)</i></p>	4 (15%)
	<p><u>Enjoyment: enjoy work at academia</u> <i>“And so it keeps me on my toes and helps me learn new things...I don't want that void in my academic knowledge acquisition.” (#17)</i></p>	10 (38%)
	<p><u>Rewarding</u> <i>“The fact that it is rewarding that I get to use my skill base, what I’ve learned from the many employers that I’ve worked for to help other students get there.” (#2)</i></p>	3 (12%)

Study 1 Results – Academic Coaches’ Different motivations (cont.)

Prosocial motivation		Total
Justification	Example Comments	
Introjected or identified regulation	<p><u>Help Students</u> <i>“So, to have academic coaches and to be an academic coach apart of that, knowing that I may save a student from quitting school, I love that. That's probably my greatest motivation.” (#24)</i></p>	12 (46%)
	<p><u>I needed help, so want to help others</u> <i>“When I was in my master's program, we had teaching coaches and...they really helped me a lot, because I was pregnant with twins and it was awful. And they really pushed me and helped me through it.” (#25)</i></p>	5 (19%)
	<p><u>Help Faculty</u> <i>“There are often students who need help that don't have anyone to get the help from because the instructors are so busy with the course load and other university responsibilities. An academic coach frees up some of their time so that they can spend more time with the students and give them the attention that they need.” (#3)</i></p>	4 (15%)

Study 2 Method – survey items

Survey items developed based on interview content analysis

Extrinsic motivation – total 11 items (7 point Likert scale)

Example items

How do the following items contribute to continue your work as an academic coach?

- I want to get a good evaluation from the faculty. (introjected)
- I want to feel worthy. (identified)
- I value the academic coach work. (integrated)

Where do you find your motivation to work as a coach?

- I want to learn online education.
- This work is a stepping stone in transition.

Study 2 Method – survey items (cont.)

Intrinsic motivation – 7 items (7-point Likert scale)

Example items

Where do you find your motivation to work as a coach?

- I enjoy working with students.
- This work is rewarding.

Please tell us why you have gone extra miles to help a student.

- Because helping student is enjoyable work.
- Because I believe helping someone is meaningful work.

Study 2 Method – survey items (cont.)

Prosocial motivation – 5 items (7-point Likert scale)

Example items

Where do you find your motivation to work as a coach? (Adapted from Grant, 2008)

- I care about benefiting others through my work.
- I want to help others through my work.
- I want to have positive impact on others.
- It is important to me to do good for others through my work.

Contribution & Limitation

Contributions

- New insights on factors that affect the motivation of academic coach.
- Show how different motivation is related to academic coaches' job behavior and performance.
- Instructors can utilize the findings to shape how they can interact with teaching assistants.

Limitations

- Common method bias – survey responses

Future Study

- Need further study to measure the validity of developed scale.
- Should include faculty or students' perception on the coaches' performance based on different motivation.