Understanding the interplay of Motivation and Contextual Factors in eHealth Acceptance:
A Qualitative Study Exploring Healthcare Professionals’ Perspectives

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UNDERSTANDING THE INTERPLAY OF MOTIVATION AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN EHEALTH ACCEPTANCE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXPLORING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS’ PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

The uptake of eHealth is necessary to keep good quality healthcare available for everyone. Therefore, the intention to accept technology has been studied by scholars for years. Researchers agree that motivation is a strong predictor for technology acceptance. Until now, little research has been done to reveal healthcare professionals’ motivations for technology acceptance and the role of contextual factors. To enhance current empirical and practical knowledge, this exploratory study explores professionals’ motivations and how these motivations are fostered and thwarted by contextual factors. Motivations are explored with the self-determination theory, which provides the opportunity to explore healthcare professionals’ motives and how these are influenced by social contextual factors. As healthcare professionals’ context includes more than social contextual factors that could foster or thwart their motivations, the human, organization and technology –fit model was used to map other contextual factors.

Given the exploratory character of this study, a qualitative method provided rich data. Twenty-four healthcare professionals participated in semi-structured interviews. After healthcare professionals shared their views on eHealth, and some participants shared their own experiences, a scenario of a far-reaching innovation was presented, developed with the method referred to as people activities context and technology and additional motivations and factors were gathered.

The present study shows two drivers of motivations. First, motivations are regulated by identification, meaning these motives are driven by a goal the healthcare professional identifies with. For instance: contributing to patients’ quality of care. Second, motivations are regulated by integration, which means the healthcare professionals’ motivation is driven by the fact that accepting eHealth is fully in line with their own values and beliefs.

Striking, is that enhancing patients’ quality of care, drives both types of motivations. Four categories of contextual factors were identified using the human organization technology-fit framework. Self-oriented factors, such as eHealth affecting healthcare professionals’ competence to fulfil his job, patient-oriented factors, such as patients’ skills for self-care with technology, organisation-oriented factors, such as culture, structure and finance and technology-oriented factors, such as system quality are identified to healthcare professionals’ motivation. These contextual factors affect healthcare professionals’ basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness either positively or negatively, which barrier intrinsic motivation and the internalisation of extrinsic motivations. Internalisation of extrinsic motivations, sorts in higher persistence, more creativity, conceptual thinking, a positive work attitude and stronger engagement.

The present study provides first steps towards a deeper understanding of healthcare professionals’ motivations for eHealth acceptance and the interplay with contextual factors. The results show the relevance of a conceptual integration of the self-determination theory and human, organization and technology-fit model to understand healthcare professionals’ motivations and articulates the importance of studying the interplay of healthcare professionals’ motivation and the role of contextual factors in the context of eHealth acceptance. Directions for further research and practical implications are presented.

Keywords eHealth, healthcare professionals, motivation, human organization technology-fit, acceptance