Chapter 6
What Motivates the Crowd?
A Literature Review on Motivations for Crowdsourcing

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the chapter is to provide an insight into the motivation mechanisms for the crowd to participate in crowdsourcing projects. For this to happen, the authors investigate the factors which have been suggested in the literature as influencing the motivation of the crowd and the task type in each study in the related literature and contrasted the motivation factors in various contexts. The systematic literature review method has been used for the purpose of this study. This involved a comprehensive search in five scientific databases which resulted in 575 papers. This initial pool of studies has been refined in various rounds and ended in identification of 37 studies which directly targeted the topic of motivation in crowdsourcing. The study introduces various categories of motivations and investigates the factors which have been utilized in each context. Finally, possible implications for practice and potential research gaps are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Crowdsourcing is the new model for performing organizational tasks which have been introduced in 2006 by Howe (2006). Prior this date, crowdsourcing model had been used by various businesses to attract creative ideas from large numbers of people. The introduction of the term, however, resulted in much more attention to its potential benefits from businesses. A review of 24 crowdsourcing platforms indicated various applications of the model in various contexts including business, city planning, policy development, and event outreach (Seltzer & Mahmoudi, 2013). In January 2015, almost 2,900 websites in 45 languages have been indexed in Crowdsourcing.org and more than 225,000 tasks have been posted on The Amazon Mechanical Turk which is one of the most famous sites in the world. Another successful platform is iStock which is dedicated to photography industry which has been purchased by Getty Images for $50 million in 2006 (Howe, 2006) and its revenue in 2008 was approximately $163 million (Pickerell, 2012). This model has been utilized by other businesses to attract new ideas for improvement in products and services (Alireza Amrollahi, Amir Ghapanchi, & Amir Talaei-Khoei, 2014; Amrollahi & Ghapnchi, 2016; Poetz & Schreier, 2012) and in academia for solving scientific problems (Cooper et al., 2010; Graber & Graber, 2013; Stieger, Matzler, Chatterjee, & Ladstaetter-Fussenegger, 2012) and data collection (Ranard et al., 2014).

The crowdsourcing model has also attracted the attention of researchers after 2006. Tarrell et al. (2013) for instance have reviewed the related research papers in the 15 top IS journals and conferences which resulted in 135 articles which paid attention to different aspects of this model. Various theories from different areas have been used in this area of research to study topics like crowdsourcing process, technology, and governance (Pedersen et al., 2013).

Previous literature had investigated many different aspects of the crowdsourcing phenomena. This includes the concept of crowdsourcing (Doan, Ramakrishnan, & Halevy, 2011; Estellés-Arolas & González-Ladrón-De-Guevara, 2012; Kittur, Chi, & Suh, 2008; Lukyanenko, Parsons, & Wiersma, 2014), crowdsourcing process (Amrollahi, 2015; Lukyanenko & Parsons, 2012; Thuan, Antunes, & Johnstone, 2017), technology (Davis & Lin, 2011; DiGiammarino & Trudeau, 2008; Goldman et al., 2009), and various applications of crowdsourcing (Amrollahi & Ghapnchi, 2016; Gao, Barbier, & Goolsby, 2011; Sharifi, Fink, & Carbonell, 2011).

Furthermore, along with these studies, the behavior of crowd in crowdsourcing projects have been explored by scholars (Haythornthwaite, 2009; Rodriguez et al., 2007; Whelan, 2007). One of the questions in this area which is studied by many researchers is *why people participate in crowdsourcing projects?* As it is described in the literature review section, studies in this category have led to identification of

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