

An Investigation of the Factors That Motivate Users to Participate in Online Communities

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to contribute to the understanding of the online community by empirically examining the major factors motivating online community members to participate and actively contribute to their communities. In pursuing this endeavor, a comprehensive conceptual model of motivations that drive online community participation is developed based on an extensive revision of the existing relevant literature. However, modest research had been conducted to understand the online participant's motivation to participate in online communities. Thus, the current research model will enhance understanding and add to the relevant existing knowledge by categorizing digital user's motivation to participate in online communities, through the employment of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory. The paper used a deductive methodological approach adopted.

KEYWORDS

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Online Community Participation

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, online communities have attracted significant attention from scholars and practitioners (Bressler and Grantham, 2000; Kim, 2000; Shafer, 2001). This is due to the fact that these communities have dramatically transformed the manner society operates, from communication, to learning, to production and commerce (Castells, 2011). However, although online communities have increasingly pervasive natures and voluntary structures, it still remains the choice of the individual to determine the nature and amount of participation (Moon and Sproull 2008). Therefore, individuals might participate in one-off transactions driven by general search and retrieval of relevant information (Pirulli and Card 1999). Indeed, research indicates that several participants in online communities soon disengage with these communities (Arguello et al. 2006). However, other studies demonstrate that online communities are not purely temporary collections of casual foragers that

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sustain themselves, but some participants return repeatedly and participate in the online community (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2002, Lee and Cole 2003).

Although the importance of online communities is continuously increasing, there aren't enough studies that empirically analyze online communities participants motive to behave in a manner to increase satisfaction (intrinsic motivation-motivational) or reduce dissatisfaction (extrinsic motivation-hygiene). Indeed, most studies regarding communities have been conducted at a conceptual level (Koh and Kim, 2004) and from a sociological perspective (e.g. Barnes, 2007; Chen, Chang and Liu, 2012). In addition, several existing studies in the extant literature adopted multiple theories, such as technology acceptance model (TAM), trust theory, social cognitive theory, social capital theory and social network theory, to examine online community user participation (Ridings et al., 2002; Hsu and Lu, 2007; Hsu et al., 2007; Koh et al., 2007; Toral et al., 2009). However, none of these studies differentiate between motivational factors that encourage participation and hygiene factors that reduce dissatisfaction to sustain members' participation. This differentiation is significant to the understanding of the underlying psychological mechanisms of members' motivation to participate in online communities. Furthermore, this differentiation assists in designing and managing effective motivational and hygiene incentives to encourage members' participation in online communities.

To fully comprehend individuals' motivation to participate in online communities, three relevant objectives have to be addressed. The first objective is to provide an overview of the literature on online communities' participation, Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory, and Herzberg Two-Factor Theory. The second objective is to synthesize the existing literature with Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Herzberg Two-Factor Theory into a conceptual model framework that distinguishes between hygiene and motivational factors. The third objective is to derive proposals explaining individuals' motives to participate in online communities. Therefore, this work extends the current existing knowledge on online community in several important ways.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Online communities have dramatically transformed the manner society operate, from communication, learning, production and commerce (Castells, 2011). According to Akar et al., (2018), an online community is a social aggregation of people who carry out public discussion about mutual goals. Moreover, Roberts and Dinger (2016) stated that an online community is a group of people with common interests who engage in virtual interactions such as exchanging e-word of mouth and reviews. Consequently, online communities have become the subject of attention for many researchers and practitioners in the last decade (Barnes and Pressey, 2011; Bishop, 2016; Cao et al., 2013). In a social media community, people are connected with each other to share information, knowledge, and ideas (Tao Guan et al., 2018). Moreover, online communities involve people who ask, answer, and discuss common issues such as interests and practices (Zhao, Detlor, & Connelly, 2016). The definition of the term "online community" has been formulated across many disciplines; although these definitions vary, there is a significant overlap among them. There are two main principles that could be employed to define online communities. According to Roberts & Dinger (2016) online community is a group of people with common interests who engages in virtual interactions such as exchanging e-word of mouth and reviews. The first principle states that online community members dwell in a virtual space (Abuhashesh et al., 2019a). The second principle asserts that online members engage in various interactions that result in creating and building relationships which lead members to bond through mutual experiences, characteristics and principles (Bishop, 2016; Federspiel, Schaffner and Mohr, 2014). The second principle is one of the most difficult challenges of online communities due to the need to maintain the momentum of knowledge sharing and creation efforts by its participants through engaging in Q&A sessions, live chats, and providing asynchronous feedback (Hayes and Walsham, 2000). This requires a comprehensive understanding of participants needs that drive online community members to build, create, engage and remain loyal to the community. Moreover, marketers

consider online communities to be a critical aspect of ongoing interactions among customers, partners, employees, and suppliers (Abu zayyad et al., 2020). Thus, organizations significantly invest into the design of technology in order to support online communities and increase customer satisfaction through increasing employee performance (Hayajneh et al., 2020).

Past research found that it is essential to understand the existence of many user roles in the various types of online communities to be able to successfully manage and control these communities. Different types of online communities were examined in the existing related literature including consumer communities (Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides, & Alarcón-del-Amo, 2011), health communities (Han et al., 2012), innovation contest communities (Füller et al., 2014), enterprise online communities (Muller, Shami, Millen, & Feinberg, 2010; Hacker, Bodendorf, & Lorenz, 2017), and social networking sites (Alsamydai, & Al Khasawneh, 2013; Brandtzæg & Heim, 2011; Çiçek & Eren-Erdogmuş, 2013), distributed collaboration systems such as Wikipedia (Arazy et al., 2015; Welser et al. 2011), and social news aggregations such as Reddit (Choi et al., 2015). Taking this point further, scholarly research shows that there are many reasons participants might engage in online communities, ranging from enhancing self-esteem to altruistic and conformist considerations (McLure and Faraj, 2000). Moreover, the investigation by Osterloh and Frey (2000) of extrinsic and intrinsic knowledge sharing found that intrinsic drivers have a stronger influence on knowledge sharing than extrinsic drivers.

Therefore, these online communities subsist based on the above mentioned two principles, regardless of the purpose of the online community (Barnes and Pressey, 2011). Extensive research has been carried on the drivers that compel online community members to participate on a psychological level but less research has been conducted to uncover whether these drivers are a manifestation of motivational or hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1966). Hence, this study focuses on the following:

1. What motivational drivers influence online members to participate in online communities?
2. What hygiene drivers influence online members to participate in online communities?
3. Which drivers are strongly correlated to the participation of online communities?

2.1. Online Community Participation

Online community participation is among the key factors that influence the development and sustainability of an online community (Casaló, Flavian, and Guinalú, 2007). Several studies discuss the possible motivation for online community participants to engage in community activity and increase their online presence (Gharib, Philpott, & Duan, 2017). Koh and Kim (2004) asserted that a high level of participation in an online community assists in exchanging knowledge, disseminating information swiftly, and providing emotional support among participants. Hence, participation encourages individuals' identification with the community and amplifies the community's value (Algesheimer et al., 2005). Furthermore, online community sustainability significantly depends on member's participation in the community (Koh and Kim, 2004). In fact, several relevant virtual communities (e.g. Facebook) have been developed and sustained due to the active participation of community members (Abuhashesh et al., 2019b). Therefore, participation favors group cohesion where members are able to share information and experiences related to mutual interests around which the community is developed (Casaló, Flavian, and Guinalú, 2007). Additionally, Hagel and Armstrong (1997) argue that sharing a common interest with online community members is significant in encouraging participation. Furthermore, Ridings et al. (2002) identified perceived responsiveness as the key factor in developing and encouraging members' participation. Hence, if participants post several messages without reciprocation, motivation to participate in the community will not be developed. Moreover, Huang (2013) found evidence that online participation by Facebook communities is initiated by maintaining interpersonal connectivity. In contrast, Chen, Chang and Liu (2012) claimed that status and image are relevant factors to engage in online communities. Therefore, marketers need to pay close attention to online communities in order to satisfy their customers by

delivering superior values and answering all of their questions and comments (Barari et al., 2020). In other words, customers' experience about a company's products and services can be shared in an online community, thus customers' experience is an essential aspect for a company's success (Varshneya et al., 2017).

Although attention has been devoted to understanding which sources of motivation encourage users to contribute to online communities (e.g. The Five-Factor Model (Big Five), Cattell's Trait Theory, Maslow's Hierarchical Model of Motive Classification and McClland's Motive Theory) fewer studies are found to determine participants motive to behave in a manner to increase satisfaction (intrinsic motivation-motivational) or reduce dissatisfaction (extrinsic motivation-hygiene). Also, an online community has become an important source of support to community members in order to make the right decision about certain purchases or product information. Thus, online community support reduces emotional distress and dissatisfaction by providing comfort to online participants (An, Z., Meng, J., & Mendiola-Smith, L., 2020).

2.2. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow (1954) formulated a hierarchy of motivational needs for individuals. The foundation of the hierarchy is physiological needs, including the need for food and sleep. The next stage of the hierarchy is safety, which includes security needs. The third stage includes the need for love and belonging. The fourth stage addresses esteem needs, including achievement, respect and recognition. The highest stage in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs addresses self-actualization needs which are an individual's aspiration to achieve self-fulfillment and realize their full potential. Furthermore, the theory states that lower order needs must be fulfilled or satisfied in order to reach the higher order needs (Van de Sand et al., 2020).

Even though Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory has been regarded as a significant part of establishing motivational theories in education and is still widely used (Wong and Musa, 2014; Hochstetler, 2013) it has been criticized for its impracticality and empirical invalidity (Wong and Musa, 2014; Hochstetler, 2013). Even Abraham Maslow asserted reservations regarding the theory's implication because the theory assumes that individuals have identical motives which imply a lack of capacity to account for individual variation (Bishop, 2016).

Therefore, to understand why individuals choose and use particular online communities, several researchers have studied motives that drive individuals to engage in such communities. For example, Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008), claim that the main reasons for participating in social networking sites are to create friendships and seek information. Similarly, Jung et al. (2007) identified six reasons for using (SNS): self-expression, entertainment, passing time, professional advancement, communication with family and friends and keeping up with current trends. It is important to recognize that drivers/needs do not exist in a vacuum. Indeed, needs are strongly influenced by the social structure and environment (Rist, 1980; Buttle, 1989). Therefore, given that needs are influenced through the social structure in which individuals interact and participate, it is worth questioning the extent to which online communities might influence individual needs. Barnes (2007) argues that lower-order needs (physiological and safety needs) proposed by Abraham Maslow would not be suited to be fulfilled in online communities in comparison to higher order-needs. Hence it could be hypothesized:

- H1:** Online member physiological needs have a significant positive influence on member participation in online communities.
- H2:** Online member safety needs have a significant positive influence on member participation in online communities.

However, in regards to belongingness needs, various online communities are highly sociable in their orientation with group communication, with most of them facilitating the opportunity for individuals to find new "friendships" or romance (Barnes, 2007). Asch's (1951) conformity study

further asserts that individuals desire to “fit in groups”. Two levels of fitting/belonging behavior were identified: the interpersonal and collective levels. The interpersonal level occurs, for example, when individuals observe their peers behavior or belief in a subject and begin to imitate the behavior or believing in the same subject, whereas the collective level is individuals observing trends in the behavior of others, such as dressing style. Additionally, community studies provide evidence to support the idea that participants may build a strong emotional attachment to a community (e.g., Greer, 2000) with several participants reporting that they love their communities (Gefen and Ridings, 2005).

These studies indicate that online community practitioners are able to exploit this need to influence user’s behavior. For example, if participants are aware that most peers similar to them contribute actively to an online community while they do not, this fact might stimulate them to begin contributing. Therefore, it seems that belonging needs are a motivator for online communities’ participants too. Furthermore, Barnes (2007) stated that in the case of self-esteem needs, online communities that are founded on the basis of ownership and achievement enables differentiation among participants and building of self-esteem. For instance, individuals that post replies are contributing to new knowledge and information resources that help other participants (Lakhani and von Hippel, 2003) and might improve the participants status and reputation in the community (Oreg and Nov, 2008). Thus, it is hypothesized:

H3: Online member belonging needs have a significant positive influence on member participation in online communities.

H4: Online member self -esteem needs have a significant positive influence on member participation in online communities.

Finally, advancement in online communities allows participant freedom of expression and self-actualization, including customization of the online community interface design. Furthermore, online communities allow acceptance rather than judgment of expression and individual or group behavior (Wong and Musa, 2014). Thus, it seems that online communities might be an ideal platform to stratify higher-order human needs. It might be hypothesized:

H5: Online member self-actualization needs have a significant positive influence on member participation in an online community.

2.3. Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

Several studies have noted that participants behavior in online communities is driven by participants desire to maximize the value obtained from the community (e.g. Ahuja and Galvin, 2003; Arguello et al., 2006). From a theoretical perspective, Herzberg’s Motivational –Hygiene Theory could justify individual’s participation in online communities. The theory suggests that individuals will behave in a manner to increase satisfaction (intrinsic motivation) or reduce dissatisfaction (extrinsic motivation) (Herzberg et al., 1993). Respectively, both hygiene and motivational factors are correlated with individual satisfaction or dissatisfaction. However, they are not situated at opposite sides of a continuous spectrum, but they represent two distinct spectra (Lin and Lo, 2016). Moreover, dissatisfaction does not result when factors of satisfaction are not met (House and Wigdor, 1967). Therefore, hygiene factors are necessary but not sufficient to produce satisfaction. The application of content motivational theories developed for the workplace evolving to a technological context has been previously tackled (Burton, Chen, Grover and Stewart, 1993; DeSanctis, 1983; Markus and Keil, 1994; Barashev & Li, 2019). Gill (1996) asserted that participant satisfaction with a system might be enhanced through intrinsic motivational factors similar to those identified by Herzberg et al. (1993). Hence, it could be hypothesized (H6):

H6: Motivational drivers have a significant positive influence on online member participation in online communities.

Furthermore, Basset –Jones and Lloyd (2005) found that employees in a work environment will either have an internal motivation to participate to increase satisfaction or engage in behavior to reduce or avoid dissatisfaction. This is evident through looking at factors of online stores. Liang and Lai (2002) found that hygiene factors are the basic drivers employed to evaluate whether consumers access online stores and are crucial for consumers to decide whether to purchase from a particular online store platform. Therefore, it is hypothesized (H7):

H7: Hygiene drivers have a significant positive influence on online member participation in online communities.

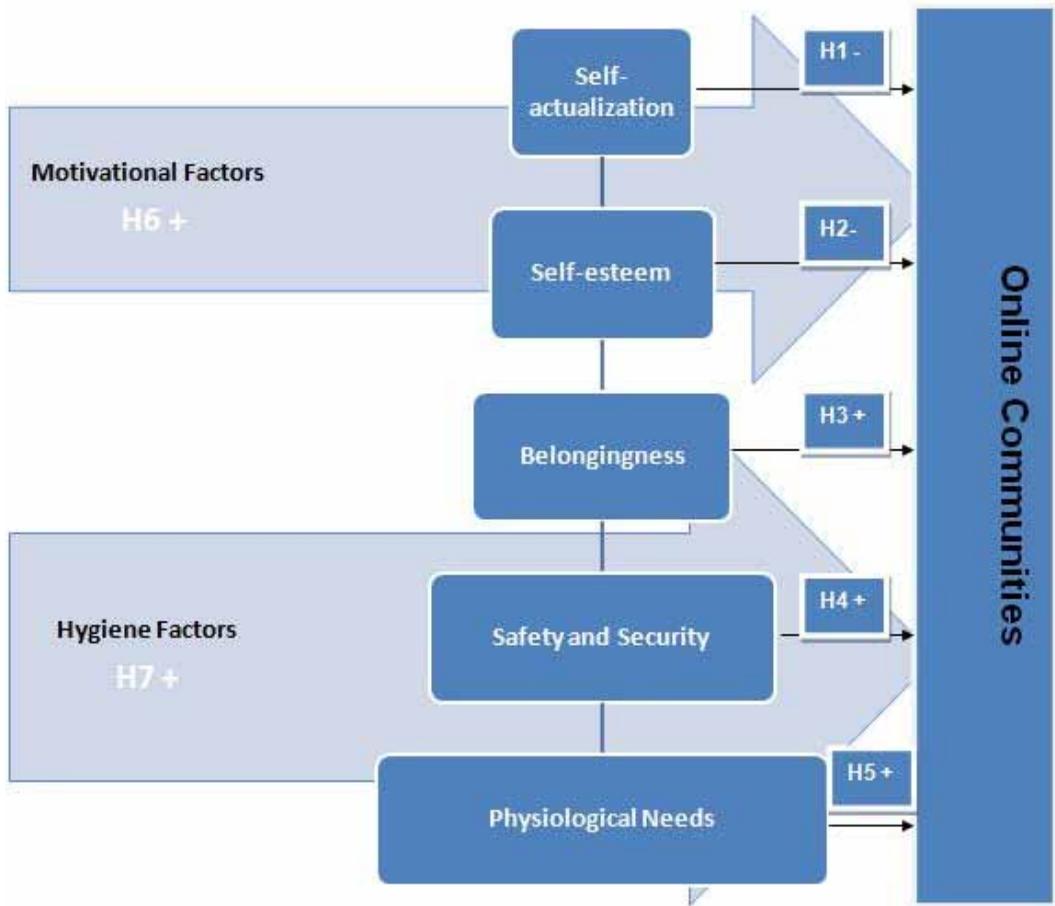
However, despite the changes in society, Basset –Jones and Lloyd (2005) claim that Herzberg’s Two–Factor Theory is viable in contemporary business settings and could provide insight into drivers and averters of employee participation. Therefore, Herzberg’s Two–Factor Theory is adopted in this study to identify and categorize hygiene and motivational factors in online community’s participation. Hence, hygiene drivers are necessary to attract online community participants to engage in online communities and are associated with dissatisfaction. However, sufficient hygiene drivers do not necessarily trigger long-lasting motivation to participate in online communities. Thus, motivational drivers are able to facilitate a long-lasting motivation to engage in online communities (Da Costa & Casais, 2020).

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to examine factors motivating online community members to participate and actively contribute to their communities, data for testing the research module was collected through the employment of a widely acknowledged research tool in behavioral science such as a questionnaire (Mihail and Elefterie, 2006). A structured questionnaire was adopted and adapted based on previous validated studies and literature. This allows the researcher to examine the relationship of different variables and analyze results. However, prior to collecting the data this study incorporated participant’s information sheet and consent forms encompassing the purpose of the study, and the participant’s rights were distributed along with the questionnaire. Hence, data was collected by means of an online and paper questionnaire with the employment of Google Doc surveys and the Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT) e-learning platform. Data were collected in a university campus located in the Capital city of Amman in Jordan where Internet was better penetrated and used than other regions. It is reported that students represent the majority of Internet users in Jordan. Therefore, choosing students as the sample of the current research was suitable. In particular, six classes were randomly selected and delivered 350 questionnaires among them. Students were asked to complete the questionnaire based on their preferred online community usage experience. Then the questionnaires were returned and the response rate was 91%. All questionnaires were then reviewed and questionnaires with too many missing values were dropped. This process resulted in 307 valid responses.

A pre-test with 20 respondents was conducted to determine ambiguous items that require adaptation. Due to respondents’ feedback, one item from self-actualization was dropped. Furthermore, all items were measured on a five-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 being “strongly disagree” to 5 being “strongly agree”.

Figure 1. Framework discussing the demographic, Maslow Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg Two-Factor module variables and how they impact the online community members to participate actively in their communities



3.1 Research Framework

For the purpose of this research and the literature review, the framework outlined above has been designed to provide transparent and comprehensive understanding of the study (Figure 1). The following framework discusses the demographic, Maslow Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg Two-Factor module variables that impact online community members to participate and actively contribute to their communities. This was followed by an investigation using a quantitative tool and the analysis of which variables influenced online community members to participate and actively contribute.

3.2. Data Collection Method

When conducting a research, quantitative technique is the main strategic method. Bryan and Bell (2007) emphasize the importance of using quantitative method in the collection and analysis of data. Therefore, this study has employed a quantitative research due to the possibility that the findings could be generalized to the particular context. They also stated that due to the difficulty and cost of collecting data from individual respondents, self-completion questionnaires are a convenient method of data collection. Furthermore, questionnaires are faster to administer and they save time. In addition, respondents enjoy anonymity while answering the questionnaires. Subsequently SPSS statistical 24.0 package analysis method is used to execute corresponding analysis.

3.3. Measurement and Scaling

The conceptualization and development of the questionnaire was based on the existing literature, and it resulted in a total of 28 items. Four additional items were included for capturing demographic information (gender, age, educational level, and average time spent on online community) (Table 1).

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Reliability testing using Cronbach’s Alpha found all constructs to be reliable at the acceptable lower limit of 0.6 (Hair et al., 2008; Nunnally, 1978) as shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Construct scales

Constructs	Items	References
Online Community Participation	PART1: In general, I am very motivated to participate in my online community activities. PART2: In general, I participate in order to stimulate my online community. PART3: I usually provide useful information to other members in my online community. PART4: In general, I post messages and responses to my online community with great excitement and frequency.	Koh and Kim (2004) Algesheimer et al. (2005)
Physiological needs (P)	P1: My online community is my life. P2: I enjoy participating in my online community. P3: I spend a long time participating and communicating with online communities on social media platforms. P4: I feel myself as a part of a caring online community.	(Barnes, and Pressey, 2011) (Bishop, 2016) (Cao, Jiang, Oh, Li, Liao, and Chen, 2013) (Oh, and Syn, 2015)
Safety and Security needs (S)	S1: I can rely on my online community in case of danger. S2: I feel safe belonging to an online community. S3: I can communicate and trust participants in my online community to help me in difficult times. S4: I am scared of participating in an online community	(Oh, and Syn, 2015) (Barnes, and Pressey, 2011) (Cao, Jiang, Oh, Li, Liao, and Chen, 2013) (Choudhury, Alani, and KMI, 2014)
Belongingness needs (B)	B1: I am welcomed in my online community. B2: I feel accepted among my online community members. B3: I establish many strong friendships in my online community. B4: I feel a sense of belonging to my online community members.	(Kang, and Jung, 2014) (Oh, and Syn, 2015) (Cao, Jiang, Oh, Li, Liao, and Chen, 2013) (Barnes, and Pressey, 2011)
Self Esteem needs (E)	E1: Participating in online communities makes me feel confident. E2: Participating in online communities makes me feel respected. E3: Participating in online communities makes me feel self-assured. E4: Participating in online communities makes me feel accomplished.	(Choudhury, Alani, and KMI, 2014) (Kang, and Jung, 2014) (Oh, and Syn, 2015)
Self -Actualization needs (A)	A1: I learn valuable information through participating in an online community. A2: I feel spontaneous through participating in an online community. A3: I look objectively at life through participating in an online community. A4: I experience mystical thoughts through participating in an online community.	(Barnes, and Pressey, 2011) (Bishop, 2016) (Choudhury, Alani, and KMI, 2014) (Kang, and Jung, 2014)
Motivational Factors (M)	M1: I find that online communities present new knowledge or skills. M2: I find that online communities involves humor. M3: I find that online communities have to be enjoyable to explore or participate in. M4: I find that online communities have to have a fine reputation.	(Zhang, and Dran, 2000)
Hygiene Factors (H)	H1: I find that online communities have to present content that supports its purpose. H2: I find that online communities have to present clear directions for navigations. H3: I find that online communities have to present support for different platforms . H4: I find that online communities have to present consistent and reliable information.	(Zhang, Von, and Dran, 2000)

Table 2. Reliability analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Physiological Needs	0.883
Safety Needs	0.750
Belongingness Needs	0.816
Self-Esteem Needs	0.948
Self-Actualization Needs	0.821
Motivational Factors	0.750
Hygiene Factors	0.819

Source: developed for the current research

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationships between the independent variables including physiological needs, safety and security needs, belongingness needs, self-esteem needs, self-actualization needs, motivational factors and hygiene factors and the dependent variable, online community participation. The seven constructs accounted for 49.2% of the variance of online community participation as shown in Table 3.

A significant, positive relationship between physiological needs and consumer participation in online communities was found (Sig. = 0.008, $\beta = 0.194$), indicating that Hypothesis 1 is supported. Next, a positive, non-significant relationship between safety and security needs and online community participation was found (Sig. = 0.177, $\beta = 0.019$), meaning Hypothesis 2 is rejected. Thirdly, a significant positive relationship between belongingness needs and online community participation was found (Sig. = 0.005, $\beta = -0.231$), indicating that hypothesis 3 is supported. The result for H4 indicates that self-esteem needs have a significant positive effect on users' participation in online communities (Sig. = .025, $\beta = 0.094$). This finding supports H4.

As shown in Table 4, self-actualization needs have a significant positive effect on consumer participation in online communities (Sig. = 0.001, $\beta = 0.17$) suggesting that consumer participation in online communities is highly and positively influenced by the need for self-actualization, thereby, supporting H5. Motivational factors have a significant positive influence on online community participation (Sig. = 0.015, $\beta = 0.286$) providing support for H6. Further, hygiene factors were found to have a significant positive effect on users' participation in online communities (Sig. = 0.009, $\beta = -0.377$) suggesting that users tend to participate more based on hygiene factors, thereby, supporting H7.

5. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to identify the most important factors relating to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory that impact online community participation. In order to accomplish this objective, a study model was developed that consisted of several factors derived from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The factors that were used for the study included physiological needs, safety and security needs, belongingness

Table 3. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.638	0.492	0.471	1.667

Table 4. Coefficients of the Regression Analysis

Model Constructs	Standardized Coefficient T_a	Sig.
Physiological Needs	0.194	0.008
Safety and Security Needs	0.019	0.177
Belongingness Needs	0.231	0.005
Self-Esteem Needs	0.094	0.025
Self-Actualization Needs	0.17	0.001
Motivational Factors	0.286	0.015
Hygiene Factors	0.377	0.009

needs, self-esteem needs, self-actualization needs, motivational factors, hygiene factors and online community participation. This empirical quantitative-based study examined a number of different online communities. The results of the study showed overall support for the model of factors driving online community participation that was developed specifically for this study. Specifically, the findings of the study demonstrated that member participation in online communities may be determined by examining two well-known theories: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory. Furthermore, the study indicated that hygiene drivers have the strongest influence on online community members’ engagement in online communities. The results of the study also showed that motivational factors are the second most important element that influences an individual’s participation in online communities. Moreover, the findings of the study indicated that the third most important factor influencing user participation in online communities is belongingness, which strongly supports the idea that any kind of communities, including online communities, must have a social aspect to them in order to motivate member participation. The findings of the study also showed that physiological needs, self-actualization needs, and self-esteem needs are significant facilitators contributing to online community participation.

5.1 Managerial Implication

The results of this study offer important implications for the development and maintenance of online communities. From a managerial perspective, the model that was developed for this study may help managers at various companies to better recognize and understand how to address online community members’ needs and the factors that motivate these members to engage in online communities. By having a deeper understanding of the factors that impact members’ online participation, managers and marketers can develop strategies to drive and increase participation in their own online communities or online communities related to their products and services. The increase in participation and engagement by online members will benefit companies by giving them better and more reliable insights about the needs and wants of these members. Companies can use the insights gained from online communities to increase the value that they provide to their customers by improving their products and processes. Furthermore, another benefit to companies from a more engaged online community is the ability to conduct relatively inexpensive marketing research through these more engaged online communities. Moreover, another benefit that companies can derive from a better understanding of what motivates online participation is the strengthening of their online and social media presence which is critical in today’s highly competitive business environment. In conclusion, by understanding what motivates members to engage in online communities, companies can develop strategies to increase engagement in online communities related to their products which should translate to more knowledge and insight

from these more engaged members and this should translate to enhanced customer satisfaction and a better customer experience.

5.2 Theoretical Implication

This research study contributed to studies on online community and what motivates online community members to participate in them by introducing a new model to examine online community members and their motivation for participating in such communities. The new model consisted of factors taken from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The factors that were taken from the two theories included physiological needs, safety and security needs, belongingness needs, self-esteem needs, self-actualization needs, motivational factors, and hygiene factors. The new model used these factors to shed more light on what elements impact online community members' motivation for participating in online communities. This new model will be useful for other researchers who want to conduct other researches relating to online communities.

5.3 Limitation and Future Studies

The information that was obtained from participants in this study used both online and paper surveys and therefore the study is impacted by all factors that limit online and paper surveys. Furthermore, the respondents to this study were mainly from Jordan. Suggestions for future studies include conducting researches on more varied populations. Researchers can also conduct cross-country researches to determine if different factors impact what motivates online community member participation in online communities in different countries. Furthermore, more research on this topic can be conducted using other factors than the ones employed by this study.

Conflicts of Interest

We wish to confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

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