The Effects of Community Feedback on Idea Refinement in Online Idea Contests

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Abstract

Online idea contests represent a novel and increasingly popular approach for organizations to leverage the creativity of the crowd for product and service innovations. In this approach, ideators present new product and service ideas on an online platform and online community members suggest ways to improve or refine these ideas. However, it is not clear whether such feedback helps improve those ideas and if so, under what conditions. In this study, we examine the role of community feedback and ideator involvement on idea refinement in online idea contests. Integrating feedback intervention and information overload concepts, we formulate hypotheses relating the direct and indirect roles of community feedback and ideator involvement on idea refinement using data from ZEISS VR ONE idea contest. Our results suggest that community feedback has a curvilinear (inverted U-shaped) relationship with idea refinement in that although some feedback helps refine initial ideas, too much feedback may hurt idea quality by overwhelming the ideator with information overload. We find evidence of direct and indirect effect of community feedback on idea refinement, although the indirect effect via ideator involvement was inconsistent with our expectations. Implications of our findings for theory and practice are discussed.

Speaker Profile

Anol Bhattacherjee is a full professor of information systems and the Exide Professor of Business Ethics at the University of South Florida. His research focuses on a broad range of topics related to healthcare informatics, crowdsourcing of innovations, dysfunctional consequences of technology use, and machine learning biases. He teaches classes on statistical data modeling, research methods, and design of innovations. In a research career spanning 22 years, Bhattacherjee has published more than 65 refereed journal papers that have received more than 18,000 citations on Google Scholar. He authored a free textbook on research methods called "Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices" that has been downloaded more than 640,000 times, used in 219 countries on six continents, and is available in seven languages. Bhattacherjee served on the editorial boards of MIS Quarterly and the Journal of the AIS and was the principal investigator in U.S. federal grants exceeding $750,000. He is the current Fulbright-Nehru Distinguished Chair, funded by the US Department of State and the Government of India, with a visiting professor appointment at Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur for Spring 2019.