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ANTECEDENTS FACTORS FOR CROWDSOURCING PARTICIPATION INTENTION IN THE FRAME OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF UZBEKISTAN

Yuliya PARAMONOVA*

*Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, yu.paramonova@wiut.uz

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ABSTRACT

As digital platforms increasingly redefine how organizations engage with talent and solve complex challenges, crowdsourcing emerges as a powerful tool to foster innovation, inclusivity, and sustainable growth. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory (SET), this research examines how work autonomy, work enjoyment, trust, and IPR concerns affect individuals' intention to participate in creative crowdsourcing tasks. Additionally, it investigates trust as a moderator, exploring how it shapes the relationship between IPR concerns and participation intention. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to university students in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The results from multiple regression analysis indicate that work autonomy and trust significantly increase crowdsourcing participation intention, while IPR concerns negatively affect participation, especially when trust is low. The moderation effect of trust further reveals that higher trust reduces the negative impact of IPR concerns, making participants more inclined to engage. This study contributes to the limited body of literature on crowdsourcing adoption in emerging economies by providing insights into the psychological mechanisms driving participation intention.

Keywords: Crowdsourcing, creative economy, crowdworking, sustainable development
JEL Clasifications: C12, C51, D03

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, globalization has fundamentally transformed how companies engage with their workforce, generate innovative ideas, and create and deliver value to customers. The rise of Web 2.0, coupled with rapid technological advancements and evolving market behaviors, has disrupted traditional business models and practices. One of the notable changes has been the implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in employment practices, which has the potential to significantly enhance efficiency and promote work flexibility in terms of both time and space (MM Block et al., 2023). This, in turn, allows employees to experience greater autonomy and higher job satisfaction. Moreover, organizations around the world are increasingly adopting crowdsourcing-based business models to address internal challenges, keep up with the ever-changing customer needs, and boost their innovation capacity (Brabham, 2008; Kohler, 2015).

By leveraging the collective intelligence and diverse skill sets of an online community, companies can better navigate the complexities of modern markets and foster sustainable competitive advantage. The term crowdsourcing was first coined by Jeff Howe (2006) to represent the process of tapping into collective intelligence of a large group of people, typically in the form of an open call, to obtain ideas and content. The primary idea behind crowdsouricng is to mobilize knowledge and expertise beyond the traditional internal workforce (Blohm et al.,

2013) to allow greater number and more diverse ideas and solutions. Crowdsourcing is instrumental in fostering innovation and generating creative solutions by engaging a broad pool of audience with unique knowledge and skills (citation). Using crowdsourcing platforms, whether internal or those of the third parties, organizations can tap into a wider talent pool with diverse expertise and perspectives. This leads to the acquisition of innovative ideas, designs, and solutions, thereby boosting quality of the output and enhancing community engagement (Oppenlaender et al., 2020).

Recent studies highlight the role of crowdsourcing platforms in promoting creativity and problem-solving capacity across multiple domains. Aside from being a cost-effective tool in soliciting skills and creativity of global talent (McAndrew et al., 2017) crowdsourcing is also credited for its role of promoting inclusivity and sustainability as well as its transformative potential in reshaping both business practices and global problem-solving efforts (Alvarez-Risco et al., 2021) As the developing economies navigate opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth and tap to enhance their competitive edge among the global players, harnessing crowdsourcing technologies becomes imperative. Both private and governmental organizations are increasingly striving to attract and motivate the crowd to engage in crowdsourcing projects (Wong, 2021; Xiao, 2021; Ingram Bogusz et al., 2019) as the means to drive innovation and economic growth.

Crowdworking as a part of crowdsourcing phenomena has been rapidly growing across the world by instantly connecting employers and workers transcending different time zones, providing opportunities for self-employment and increased work autonomy (Spreitzer et al., 2017; Gol et al., 2018). Some crowdsourcing jobs involve routine and micro tasks and therefore require a minimal set of skills and short time frames while being rewarded with trivial payment e.g., tagging pictures or providing feedback (Deng et al., 2016). However, this paper focuses on crowdsourcing jobs involving more creative and complex approach including but not limited by the web design, software development and content creation which require higher level of expertise and more commitment while providing a more sophisticated reward structure (Margaryan, 2016; Gol et al., 2018). These tasks may be referred to as creative crowdwork, involving an elaborate process of data collection, task design, ideation and implementation (Thuan et al., 2015). Consequently, they also require a more elaborate organization to manage the inherent complexity (Shafiei, 2020).

This study seeks to fill a literature gap by examining the antecedent factors that drive participation intention in creative crowdsourcing platforms, focusing on the unique context of emerging economies like Uzbekistan. Although extensive research on crowdsourcing exists, most studies focus on developed economies, leaving a gap in understanding the factors influencing crowdsourcing adoption in less-explored regions. Furthermore, while previous research has identified monetary rewards, reputation, and recognition as motivators, limited attention has been given to how work autonomy, task enjoyment, trust, and IPR concerns affect participation intention in creative crowdsourcing tasks.

In the remainder of the article, Section 2 reviews the relevant empirical studies. Section 3 outlines the methodology and describes the dataset used. Section 4 further presents the econometric analyses and offers a thorough discussion of the causality test results. Finally, Section 5 summarizes the main findings and provides policy recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of creative economy was introduced by John Howkins in his book ‘Creative economy: How to make money from ideas (Howkins, 2001). The author laid the foundation for understanding the economic value of creativity, innovation, and intellectual property in the modern economy. The creative economy encompasses various sectors like arts, design, media, technology, and entertainment, where creativity and innovation are cornerstone

in value creation. Hawkins stressed the importance of creativity as a driver of economic growth while emphasizing the role of intellectual capital in shaping the creative industries. Subsequent research works had explored the importance of creative economy in driving economic growth, innovation and cultural output (Chua et al., 2014). Some have suggested that properly designed and trustworthy platforms can play a major role in providing job opportunities to younger individuals who otherwise may be excluded or have limited access to conventional job markets due to their lack of experience or the scarcity of job vacancies in rural or distant areas (Paramonova & Tashmatova, 2024, O'Higgins and Pinedo 2022).

Enabled by the digital platforms, the sharing economy has become a major driver of innovation and collaboration within the creative economy, leading to the emergence of new business models and opportunities (Vedran & Andre, 2023; Lehdonvirta et al., 2019; Richter et al., 2017; Martin, 2016). By assigning tasks to a wide network of solvers both inside and outside the organization, crowdsourcing platforms allow to exploit talents and creativity of diverse groups of individuals resulting in the production of novel creative solutions (McAndrew et al., 2017). By tapping into collective intelligence of the crowd companies enhance creativity, tackle complex challenges, and encourage sustainable innovation in the fast-changing digital landscape.

The number of active solvers on the crowdsourcing platform is a critical issue for the platforms' success in meeting the needs of the seekers to obtain better quality solutions (*Hautz et al. 2014, Yang et al.)*. In addition to that, the greater number of solvers with diverse expertise help platforms gain competitive advantage in the marketplace and increase profitability *(Terwiesch and Xu 2008).* Therefore, attracting a large pool of solvers and maintaining their active participation are two key priorities for crowdsourcing platforms (Wang, 2022). There is a number of literature sources that investigate motivations for crowdsourcing participation (Fischer et al., 2019; Ke & Zhang, 2010; Liang et al., 2018; Ye & Kankanhalli, 2017; Zhao & Zhu, 2014a; Zheng et al., 2011) including studies focusing on the role of IPR in open innovation and creativity (Al-bloush & Solemon, 2018; Bican et al., 2017; Cho & Kim, 2017; Galasso, 2020; Gao et al., 2020; Mazzola et al., 2018; Papageorgiadis & Sharma, 2016). Most of these studies are from the Western or South East Asian countries.

The principles of social exchange theory that explains human behavior in social exchanges has been applied to understand drivers behind knowledge sharing in online communities (Hsu et al., 2007; Ye et Kankanhalli., 2017). Prior studies suggest that solvers will contribute to communities if they believe they would receive benefits that could include recognition, reputation and enjoyment (Ye and Kankanhalli et al., 2017, Feng and Ye, 2016; Geri et al., 2017). In the crowdsourcing contest individuals contribute their time and effort to obtain certain benefits, such as monetary rewards, skill enhancement, peer recognition, work autonomy and enjoyment and consider whether their participation would be fairly acknowledged (Afuah and Tucci, 2012). The author has chosen this theory to serve as an appropriate basis to assess creative solvers' participation intention. As the theory suggests, the crowd members will consider the expected benefits against the expected costs and will only reciprocate or engage in exchange behavior if the benefits outweigh the potential costs (Ye & Kankankhalil, 2017, Ye et al., 2015, Wasko and Faraj, 2005). The research on crowdsourcing participation is reletively scarce in Uzbekistan (Paramonova & Tashmatova, 2024). Thus empirically testing this theory by investigating the impact of costs and benefits on solvers' future participation is critical in enhancing the crowdsourcing adoption across the country.

Multiple knowledge management studies have assessed the antecedent factors for knowledge sharing (Ye et al., 2017; Sedighi et al., 2016; Zheng et al., 2011; Hung et al., 2011; Brabham 2008). Based on the studies covering non-technological aspects, including benefits and individual costs, monetary rewards, peer recognition and reputation, task enjoyment,

knowledge and skill enhancement were identified as key motivational factors behind participation in crowdsourcing communities (Ye et al., 2017; Sedighi et al., 2016; Wu and Zhu, 2012; Kaufman, 2011; Brabham, 2008). Other studies have emphasized the importance of work autonomy and trust perception in predicting solvers' participation behavior (Ye et al., 2017; Deng et al., 2016; Zheng et al., 2011).

3. DATA AND METHOD

Based on the literature review, two key benefits, work autonomy and work enjoyment, were identified as antecedents of solvers' participation intention in my model. These factors are particularly relevant in the context of creative crowdsourcing communities, where individuals often prioritize autonomy and enjoyment as crucial components of job satisfaction. Prior research highlights that solvers are likely motivated by the enjoyment derived from engaging in new and stimulating tasks (Goh et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2011). Additionally, studies emphasize the importance of hedonic value and enjoyment in sustaining long-term participation. For instance, Sun et al. (2011) found a positive correlation between enjoyment and continuous participation intention in crowdsourcing activities. Similarly, Zheng et al. (2011) and Sun et al. (2012) reported that the pleasure derived from task involvement significantly enhances solvers' intention to participate in crowdsourcing initiatives.

Thus, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1. Work autonomy is positively associated with crowdsourcing participation intention
H2. Work enjoyment is positively associated with crowdsourcing participation intention

Prior research also suggests that trust is an important determinant of crowdsourcing engagement (Paramonova &Tashmatova 2024, Ye & Kankanhalil, 2017; Kim, 2014). Trust and the perception of fairness related to rewards distribution is positively associated with participation behaviour (Feller et al. 2012, Zheng et al. 2011). Hense, we hypothesise:

H3. Trust is positively associated with crowdsourcing participation intention.

To the best of the author's knowledge, there is a limited body of research examining the cost factors influencing solvers' participation behavior in crowdsourcing. Several studies suggest that intellectual property rights (IPR) protection is a significant concern in open innovation and knowledge management (Ullah et al., 2017; Pe'nin, 2013; Hagedoorn & Ridder, 2012). Understandably, individuals are often reluctant to share knowledge and ideas they deem valuable (Ullah et al., 2017). Therefore, knowledge-sharing platforms must address IPR concerns by implementing comprehensive and robust IPR policies to encourage greater participation (Tekic & Willoughby, 2019; Ullah et al., 2017; Buccafusco et al., 2014). Additionally, there is no empirical research in Uzbekistan that examines the impact of work autonomy and task enjoyment on knowledge-sharing intentions. Little is known about the moderating role of Trust in shaping the relationship between the costs (e.g. IPR concerns) and crowdsourcing participation intention. To address this gap, our model includes Trust as a moderator, allowing us to explore both its direct and moderating effects on crowdsourcing participation. The following hypotheses have been formulated to test these relationships:

H4. IPR concerns are negatively associated with crowdsourcing participation intention
H5. Trust Moderates the relationship between IPR concerns and crowdsourcing participation intention.

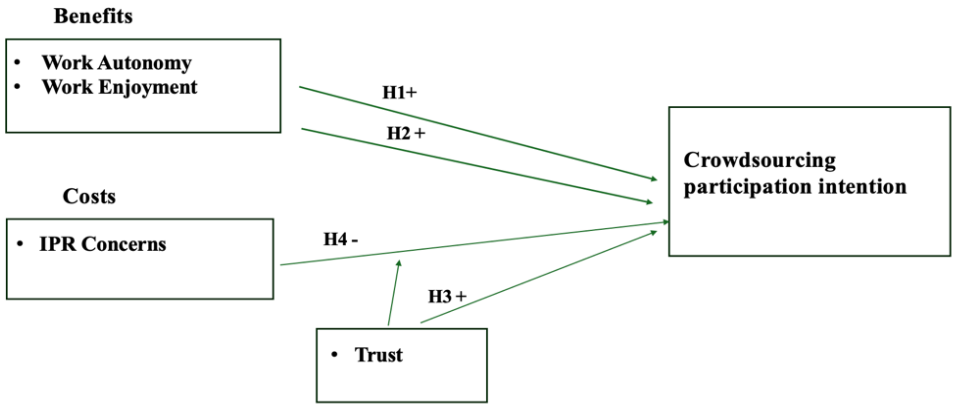

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

The data for this research has been gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed to university students via online crowdsourcing platform www.crowd.uz. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a diverse group of students from international universities in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, ensuring variability in responses. The sample size is 130 participants, which is deemed to provide sufficient statistical power for the regression analysis. According to Cohen (1988), a sample size of approximately 100 participants is typically enough to achieve a statistical power of 0.80, which indicates an 80% probability of detecting an effect if one truly exists and demonstrate reliability. The survey questionnaire included items that measured both the dependent and independent variables using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement and 5 indicated strong agreement.

The dependent variable in this study is crowdsourcing participation intention, which will be measured using a three-item scale adapted from previous research on participation intention in digital platforms (e.g., Zhao & Zhu, 2014). The items will focus on respondents' willingness to participate in crowdsourcing activities. The independent variables are as follows:

- Work Autonomy: Measured using a three-item scale adapted from the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), focusing on the perceived freedom and discretion in completing tasks.
- Work enjoyment: This variable captures the level of intrinsic motivation and pleasure derived from engaging in crowdsourcing tasks (Venkatesh et al., 2003).
- IPR Concerns: This variable was measured using a three-item scale based on Bozeman (2000) to evaluate participants' concerns about intellectual property rights and the risk of work misuse.
- Trust: A three-item scale adapted from Greenberg (1990) measures participants' perceptions of distributive and procedural fairness within the crowdsourcing process.

To accurately measure the effects of the independent variables on crowdsourcing participation intention, the study introduces one moderation variable. Trust is included as a key moderator variable that may influence the strength or direction of the relationship between the independent variable such as IPR concerns—and the dependent variable. By including a moderator, the study aims to capture more complex dynamics, exploring whether the impact of the independent variables on participation intention changes under different levels of trust. This study employs a quantitative research approach using multiple regression analysis to investigate the determinants of crowdsourcing participation intention. Conceptual framework above

outlines the variables and their expected relationships to test the above hypotheses. The regression analysis will help identify the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Model 1, the influence of the key variables on crowdsourcing participation intention has been examined through a multiple regression analysis. The independent variables included autonomy, task enjoyment, trust, and IPR concerns. This model was designed to test the individual and collective effects of these variables on participants' intention to engage in crowdsourcing activities.

The results of the regression analysis in the Model 1 indicate an F-statistic of 16.25 with a p-value of 0.000, meaning that the combination of work autonomy, work enjoyment, trust, and IPR concerns explains a significant amount of the variation in participation intention. R-squared of 0.3439 indicates that approximately 34.39% of the variance in crowdsourcing participation intention is explained by the Model.

Table 1: Results of Multiple Regression Model 1 Estimation

Variables	Coeff.	Std.Err.	t- statistic	P value
AUTONOMY	0,2631	0,1025	2,57	0,011
ENJOYMENT	0,1009	0,0816	1,24	0,219
TRUST	0,1910	0,0959	1,99	0,049
IPRCONCERN	0,1110	0,0799	1,39	0,167
Constant	1,4151	0,4367	3,24	0,002
R^2	0,3439	Adjusted R^2: 0.3227		
F statistic	16.25	P value (F statistic): 0.000		

These results align with Social Exchange Theory (SET), which suggests that individuals engage in activities when the perceived benefits outweigh the associated costs. In the case of crowdsourcing participation, work autonomy emerges as a significant motivator ($p = 0.011$), as it provides participants with the freedom to choose when and how to complete tasks, reducing psychological costs. Task autonomy serves as an impactful benefit, particularly in creative contexts, where individuals value flexibility and independence. Although work enjoyment positively correlates with participation, its non-significant effect ($p = 0.219$) suggests that while enjoyment enhances the experience, it does not carry enough weight to drive participation on its own.

The significant impact of trust ($p = 0.049$) highlights its role in reducing the perceived risks and uncertainties associated with crowdsourcing. Trust functions as an essential extrinsic benefit by minimizing concerns about fairness, payment, and data privacy, which in turn encourages engagement. On the other hand, IPR concerns, while negatively related to participation intention, do not show a statistically significant effect ($p = 0.167$). This suggests that although participants may recognize IPR risks as potential costs, they are not substantial enough to deter participation, especially when balanced against the benefits of autonomy and trust. In sum, the findings illustrate that fostering autonomy and trust can shift the cost-benefit balance favorably, making participation more appealing, while enjoyment serves as an added value rather than a critical driver in participation decisions.

Model 2 builds on the first model by examining the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between IPR concerns and participation intention. The inclusion of the interaction term between trust and IPR concerns tests whether higher levels of trust can mitigate the negative impact of IPR concerns on participation. The model yields an F-statistic of 13.89 with

a p-value of 0.000, confirming that the interaction term significantly improves the model fit and contributes to the explanation of participation intention.

The R-squared value for Model 2 is 0.3608, indicating a slight improvement in the model's explanatory power with the inclusion of the interaction term. While the R-squared values are moderate, they are appropriate for behavioral research, where participation intention is shaped by complex human decision-making processes that may involve factors not fully captured by the model. This suggests that trust plays a critical role not only as a direct predictor but also as a buffering mechanism, reducing the negative influence of IPR concerns on crowdsourcing participation intention.

Table 2: Results of Multiple Regression Model 2 Estimation

Variables	Coeff.	Std.Err.	t- statistic	P value
AUTONOMY	0,2516	0,1010	2,47	0,015
ENJOYMENT	0,0838	0,0815	1,03	0,305
TRUST	0,5877	0,2393	2,46	0,015
IPRCONCERN	0,4230	0,1899	2,23	0,028
IPR_trust	-0,0722	0,0399	-1,01	0,073
Constant	-0,1231	0,9552	-0,13	0,898
R^2	0,3608	Adjusted R^2: 0.3348		
F statistic	13,89	P value (F statistic): 0.000		

This model introduces trust as a moderator of the relationship between IPR concerns and participation intention. The interaction term is marginally significant (p = 0.073), suggesting that higher levels of trust reduce the negative effect of IPR concerns on participation. This finding is crucial for crowdsourcing platforms managers, as it indicates that concerns about intellectual property are less likely to deter participation if participants trust the platform's ability to protect their contributions. In this model, the direct effect of IPR concerns becomes significant (p = 0.028), highlighting that, in the absence of trust, concerns about intellectual property rights can significantly lower participation. The importance of work autonomy is also confirmed in this model demonstrating that it remains a significant predictor of participation (p = 0.015).

5. CONCLUSION

This study provides several practical insights for crowdsourcing platforms and organizations aiming to integrate crowdsourcing into their innovation strategies. The findings highlight the critical role of work autonomy, suggesting that platforms should implement flexible task structures that allow participants to determine how, when, and what tasks to complete. Enhancing autonomy is shown to foster greater engagement and participation. The study also underscores the importance of trust within crowdsourcing environments. Platforms must actively build and maintain trust through transparent processes, reliable communication, and robust intellectual property protections. Addressing concerns about IPR misuse is particularly relevant in emerging economies like Uzbekistan, where crowdsourcing technology is still new, and adoption levels remain low.

Ensuring that participants feel confident in how their contributions are valued is likely to increase their involvement and engagement on the platform. The results suggest that autonomy and trust are more effective in sustaining participation than focusing solely on enjoyable experiences. Platforms that provide a sense of ownership and security are better positioned to achieve long-term engagement. From a theoretical perspective, this study aligns

with Social Exchange Theory (SET), demonstrating that individuals are more likely to participate when the perceived benefits (such as autonomy) outweigh the costs. Trust emerges not only as a direct driver of participation but also as a moderator that mitigates the negative impact of intellectual property concerns. When participants trust the platform, concerns about their intellectual property are less likely to discourage their involvement.

This study, however, faces certain limitations. First, the analysis focuses on the dynamics of work autonomy, trust, and IPR concerns, leaving other possible external factors unexplored. Additionally, the research primarily examines intention to participate rather than actual participation, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Future research could explore how different forms of trust (e.g., interpersonal vs. institutional trust) affect participation across various sectors where intellectual property is particularly sensitive.

Moreover, the findings are drawn from specific crowdsourcing contexts, and regional characteristics—like those in emerging economies such as Uzbekistan—may affect the applicability of the conclusions in other settings. Further studies could investigate how trust-building efforts vary across industries and how different task structures influence participation in sectors beyond creative industries. This research opens avenues for deeper exploration of the psychological mechanisms driving participation and the channels through which autonomy and trust interact, offering practical insights for platform organizers aiming to foster sustained engagement.

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