



MASLOW HIERARCHICAL MODEL: WHERE IS SOCIAL CONNECTION?

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ABSTRACT

Maslow hierarchical model is the basic model used across various disciplines of business management, marketing, technology and education. The professionals in B-schools often taught about various motivational theories to improve the productivity in the organization. The most basic theory of motivation is Maslow motivation's theory. Most of the researchers have talked about the positives and strengths of Maslow's hierarchical model. The researchers have discussed about application of hierarchical model in different manners to improve the morale of the employees. The main aim of this research paper is to talk about the weakness of Maslow hierarchical model. The writers here criticize the Maslow's hierarchical model for lacking social connection.

Keywords- Maslow theory, Social connection, Motivation, Social-Media, Hofstede model

Introduction

The first basic theory which comes to our mind for motivation is Maslow's motivational theory. Maslow's model talked about five types of needs- physiological, safety, love/belongingness, esteem and self-actualization. Rutledge (2011) argued that Maslow model was only a hierarchical structure and it lacks social connection. The researchers will

put their point in favour of Rutledge that Maslow's model lack social connection to a great extent. In this era of marketing when social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are added promotional tool for marketing mix of the companies, it is very hard to survive on the basic principles of Maslow's theory of motivation without talking about social interconnection.

Objectives

The key objectives of this research paper has been mentioned below.

1. To study Maslow's hierarchical model from the perspective of social connection.
2. To make an understanding of social media accounts in the consumer decision making process.

Maslow hierarchical model: What it said?

Maslow hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory developed by Abraham Maslow in 1943(Maslow, 1943). The Maslow theory of motivation was based on the fact that human beings are motivated by unsatisfied needs and those lower needs should be satisfied before reaching towards the higher needs of the individuals. In his hierarchical model of motivation, Maslow talked about psychological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization as shown in the figure 1. The base element of the Maslow hierarchical model talked about biological and psychological needs. The biological and psychological needs of an individual are oxygen to breathe, food, water, shelter and sleep. These needs have a repetition cycle every day. The safety needs of an individual consist of protection, security, law & order, and limits. The individuals seek security and protection from the government to protect their money and families. The third level in Maslow hierarchical model talked about love and belongingness needs. The individuals look for love and affection from their loved ones. The individuals also look for belongingness while working in group.

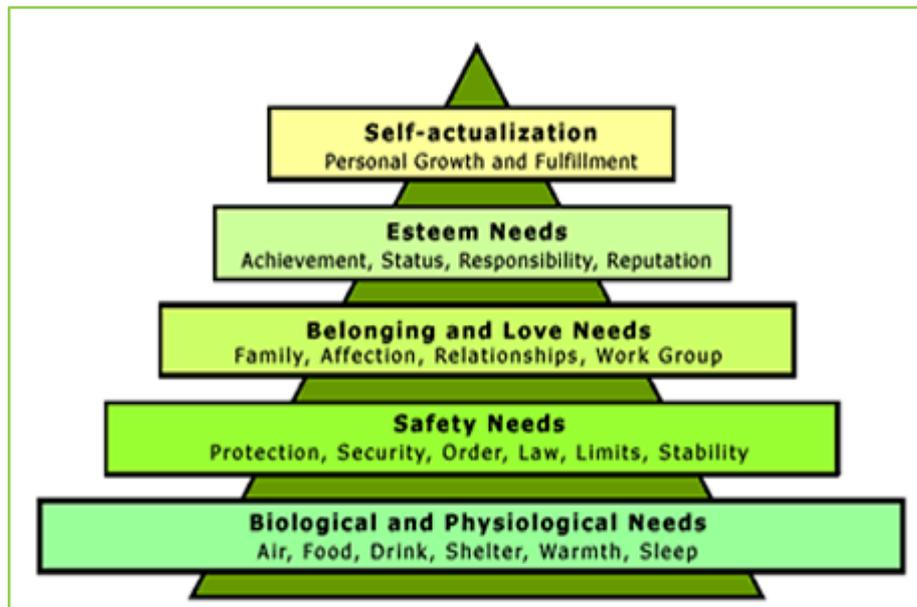


Figure 1(Maslow, 1943)

For example, Hofstede mentioned China has a collectivistic culture in which individuals look to work in groups and support each other. The individuals look for esteem needs once their biological, safety and love needs have been fulfilled. In Esteem needs, an individual look towards achievements, status and reputation at workplace and in the society. After achieving esteem needs, an individual looks for self-actualization needs. In self-actualization, the individual looks towards personal growth and fulfilment.

Maslow theory lacks social connection

The Maslow model of hierarchy was popular across various parts of the world and it has been accepted as the base theory of motivation. This model has been widely accepted across various parts of the world but this model avoids insights from the use and adoption of social technologies like Facebook and Twitter. Rutledge (2011) made a statement that Maslow’s model of hierarchy misses the role of social connection and collaboration. The writer agrees with this statement. 21st century is the century of internet and technology in which social media made a direct connect with the customers. The Maslow model is not able to make that much required social connect(Rutledge, 2011). The Maslow model misses the much-required social connection as none of the Maslow’s needs can be achieved without social connection. Human beings are social animal. There is no survival without making social connect and collaboration with each other. The social media helped the individuals to cross the geographical boundaries and make connection with each other. The society is getting more complex and reliance on each other is increasing. Maslow defined a hierarchical structure of

the needs but in actual the needs are not hierarchical. The needs are interactive, dynamic system but they are anchored in our ability to make social connect with each other(Cao, et al., 2013). Maslow tried to show a picture in which needs are hierarchical in nature but in actual needs are not hierarchical. Needs are similar to most other things are interactive in nature. They are anchored in our ability to make social connect. Maslow put love and belongingness in the third stage but in actual belongingness is the driving force for human behaviour. All the needs either food, shelter, safety, sex, leadership, competence or trust depend on our ability to connect with each other.

Maslow talked about different hierarchical models but those models are difficult to achieve without making a social connect in the society(Denning, 2012). The collaboration among the individuals and in the society, is much needed. Maslow model achieved great success in 20th century because there was less population, education, skills, emotional connect and complexities in the society. The generation in 21st century is more educated and skilled(Judy & D'Amico, 1997). They have enough resources to fulfil their biological and social needs but they are extensively looking for a social connect. The social connect help them to reduce their complexities. Maslow put the needs of social belongingness and love at third hierarchical level and he maintained the fact that without completing the basic two levels of biological needs and security needs third level can't be achieved. The writer disagrees with this fact, belongingness can't be categorized at third level. The love and belongingness is the first need which connect you with each other and then all other needs follow. Rutledge given a diagram of social connection to meet out psychological needs. The figure two is showing the social connection diagram provided by Rutledge. The social connection is much more important to meet our psychological needs.



Figure 2(Chan, 2015)

This 21st century is the century of globalization(Mathews, 2005). In this globalized era people have less time to visit each other and purchase things from shop. People especially youngster prefer online shopping because it saves their time and effort. People are more actives on social media accounts such as Facebook, Linked-in, Twitter and Google+. Linked-in is a professional social media account but on Facebook people discuss their daily happenings, update status, share pictures and videos. Facebook is connecting people across the boundaries. If we follow the hierarchical structure given by Maslow than it is mandatory that an individual should have Linked-in account first before registering himself to the Facebook account but the actual scenario is different. Till January 2016, there were 1.55 billion Facebook users in comparison to 100 million LinkedIn users(Chan, 2015). It can be said that people are giving more weightage to their social connect rather than professional connect. We can take the example of Asian countries especially China in which people value more too long-term relationship and Guanxi networks(Don Y. Lee, 2005). It is hard to negotiate with Chinese people if other party is simply talking on professional terms. Chinese make a social connect first to break the ice and then they continue with their negotiation process. In the today's word where face-to-face conversation is hard due to lack of time and geographical boundaries. The technology and social accounts are creating a bridge for smooth communication and connect between the people.

Social Media Accounts: Making an emotional connect with customers

Consumer decision making process involves six steps as shown in figure 3. The second step of consumer decision making process is information search and third step is evaluation of alternatives(Solomon, 2014). The social media technologies play a key role consumer decision making process in present era. The consumers' use secondary resources for information search. The social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter and Google + are the prime choices of the customers for searching the information about a product. Many companies are adopting born-global approach for their products and services since the time of inception. The social networking sites are providing a platform of two-way communication to the companies. The social media channels help the brands in making an emotional connect with the customers in many ways(Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Social media channels are helpful in getting emotional identity of a person. The technical department of the companies' can get whole information about followers who follow their brand through social media channel. The social media channels create a positive feeling about the purchase in the minds of customers because they feel directly connected with their company. There are two type of decision

making involves in consumers' decision making process- high involvement and low involvement. In the high involvement decision making consumers often do extensive research and they also look for opinion of their friends and families. The social media accounts are the key for their extensive as they look for the posts and comment of company's products. They also collect information from their peers in local country and foreign location through social media channels.



Figure 3

Social media channels have a broader scope in present time. As the online purchasing habits of customers are increasing social media channels are emerging as a new tool of promotional mix to the company(Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The posts and displays on the social media channels act as touch point to the customers. All the new SMEs and big multinational organization maintain their Facebook page because it is cheap source of promotion and it will provide access to mass number of audience. In this competitive era, the companies look to achieve economies of scale and social media channels help them in achieving economies of scale. The adoption of social media channels is increasing among the customers. In 2010 there were more than 500 million active users on Facebook. Twitter was launched in 2006 and approximately 10 billion messages, tweets had been sent through twitter since its inception(Baird & Parasnis, 2011). The number of online visitors are increasing in Asian countries as well. The social media channels are helpful for the companies in understanding the customers' value about the perception gaps between their expectations and reality. Branding is an important activity for the marketers. The number of followers on social media are increasing and those social media channels are a way to promote brands. The social media channels are playing a key role in brand-customer relationships.

Starbucks is a big brand around the world. The statistics about Starbucks tell that company is effectively using social media channels for making and emotional connect with the customers. Starbucks has 37.32 million Facebook likes, 6.56 million Twitter followers, 2.89 million Instagram fans and 2.86 million Google + followers(Huff, 2014). The company use eye-catchy pictures, images and ultra-clever videos to make an emotional connect with the customers. The company also create several quizzes and questions about the new products and beverages to be introduced at Starbucks. The comments and answers of the customers clarify their opinions and accordingly company can make a change in the products. The company is strategically using Twitter to attract the customers and making a bond with them. There are not posting daily on Twitter. Starbucks team post unique content on Twitter and they also use Twitter as a service to reach out to customers and talking about their in-store and product experiences.

The consumers often create a self-connection with the brands when brands have been used to satisfy psychological needs, reinforce identity and allow an individual to connect to others. Social media sites play an important role in making self-connection with the customers because it contains all the information customer desire about the brand(Turri, et al., 2013). Social media channels are also helpful in developing intimacy about the brands. Intimacy in the human relationships is the feeling of attachment and commitment. After sales behaviour of the customer matters for the big brands. The social media channels also positively affect the after sales behaviour of the customers towards the brand of the company. The customers got all type of instant information about the products which increase their repetitive purchase behaviour. The big brands also provide after sales services to the customers with the help of social media networks. It will also make a positive impact on the relationship with the brands.

Walmart is a global retail brand and the company has tried to develop its Facebook presence and making an emotional connect with the customers. Walmart has populated its Facebook timeline with an image of every year since the time of its inception(Moth, 2013). The company is doing two and five updates daily including weekends. The customers are posting several number of responses on the posts of the company. The technical team of the company post several questions on Twitter different topics like sports and entertainment. They have not restricted themselves to their own company questions while communicating with the outside world on Twitter. They are not using Twitter as the marketing tool of the company rather they are using it to engage the prospective and current customers in useful arguments.

Walmart is making a long lasting emotional connect with the customers with the help of Facebook, Linked-in and Pinterest but it is not using Google+ effectively.

Technology Adoption Model and Online purchasing behaviour of customers

The researchers claimed that 90% of consumers' decision making is based on impulse buying. In this era of digital technology, the company's website and social media channels positively affect the impulse buying behaviour(Ozer, 2012). Technology adoption model explains that how consumer behaviour takes place in digital environment. The two main determinants of Technology Adoption Model are social norms and web usage. Social norms related to the product related information shared through social interactive tools.

The combination of web usage and social interactive tools made and influence on the purchase behaviour of the individuals(Ozer, 2012). In recent years, all big brands, medium and small enterprises have noticed the impact of social media in purchase decision making process. They know that social norms are playing a key role in the final decision making of the customers and those social norms are created by analysing the behaviour on social media channels. The social networking sites are helpful in doing integrated communication with the customers and improve their social environment. The consumers' web usage also increase because social media channels often linked with the websites of the company. The consumers can also visit the websites while collecting information on social media channels. Social media as a new component has affected the consumer decision making as the buying attitudes are not merely affected by traditional channels but extend to the online platforms. The final decision making of the customers is often influenced by the inputs provided by the parties beyond the control of online marketers such as peer reviews, social networks and comments on the social networking accounts(Lee, 2013). Traditionally consumers' decision was only affected by traditional marketing mix but now other uncontrollable stimuli like social media is affecting the decision making of the customers. The material on the social networking sites is more natural and unbiased so social media is an important tool for information search and purchasing decisions of the company. The information flow is fast and strong with the help of social media channels.

Findings

It can be said that Maslow's hierarchical model was very much successful in 20th century for motivating the employees towards organizational objectives but 21st century present new challenges of social connection. On one hand the social connection is necessary among the

various hierarchical needs of the employees, on other hand the consumer decision making process also depends upon emotional connect with them through social media accounts. It is not always the case that people deprived from lower level of motivational needs may strive for self-actualization as well. For example, Mahatma Gandhi was the leader for which need of self-esteem was more prominent than social needs. Current Maslow model is not matching our brains. There is need to rewire the Maslow model which has been done. We also need to teach the future managers about the rewiring in Maslow's model. We are living in the technology era where social networking sites and internet initiate the same hunger in people as their other social needs do. The social connection help us in better collaboration among all the needs mentioned earlier by Maslow. The only change is that we should try to see the motivational needs in interconnection form rather than hierarchical pyramid.

Conclusion

Based on overall discussion, it can be concluded that Maslow has put the needs of love and belongingness at third stage in its hierarchical model. In actual the feelings of love and belongingness are required initially to make a social connect. It is true that Maslow's model lacks much needed social connect in this era of globalization. Secondly the social networking sites are playing a key role in consumer decision making process to make an emotional connect between company and customers. The online purchasing behaviour in the consumers is increasing. With the increase in the online purchasing behaviour the consumers often look for valuable suggestions from their families and friends on social networking sites. The social media accounts are an important component for the marketers to sell their products and services.

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