

To Flip or Not to Flip: Conformity Effect Across Cultures

Bruce Ferwerda & Christine Bauer

Jönköping University (Sweden) & Utrecht University (The Netherlands)

bruce.ferwerda@ju.se & c.bauer@uu.nl



Research Goal: The relevance of “flipping direction” in conformity behavior across cultures.

Take Away: People from collectivistic cultures show higher tendencies to conform than people from individualistic cultures. For both cultures, the tendency to conform is more pronounced when the outcome of the behavior is negative.

INTRO

Frequently observed that an individual adapts their behavior to fit in with the group's majority opinion: social conformity.

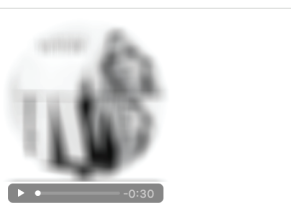
Relevance of an online settings and HCI:

- Social interactions increasingly happen online
- Spread of misinformation: conforming with the majority about the credibility of an article
- Influence of social nudges on product selection on e-commerce platforms
- Finding unanimous agreements in group decision-support systems

STUDY DESIGN

We developed an online experiment in which participants needed to reach a positive group consensus on adding a song to a music playlist. After seeing the group members' ratings, the participants had the opportunity to revise their own.

Candidate Song



Song name:
On to Something Good

Artist name:
Ashley Monroe

Do you know this artist?

Yes No

Do you know this song?

Yes No

Would you like this song to be added to the playlist?

Yes Maybe Yes Maybe No No

Next Step

Anonymous Group Responses

Remember that an unanimous positive (i.e., "yes" or "maybe yes") decision need to be reached before a song will be added to the playlist.

Group Member Yes

Group Member Yes

Group Member Yes

Group Member Yes

Please make your final judgment on this song.

Would you like this song to be added to the playlist?

Yes Maybe Yes Maybe No No

Next Step

RESULTS & CONCLUSION

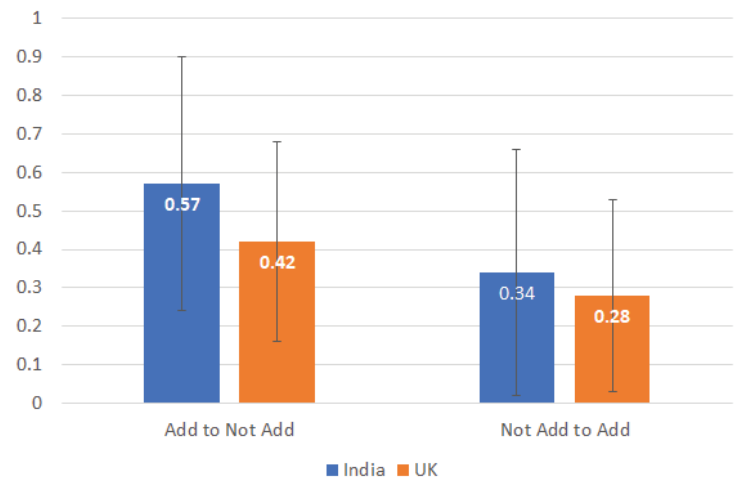


Chart: Average flipping behaviors per country based on individual normalized values in the closed interval [0,1]. Scores closer to 1 indicate a higher degree of overall flipping behavior.

- Stronger conformity tendency in collectivistic cultures (India) than in individualistic (UK) ones
- More pronounced conformity effect when the outcome of the behavior is negative (thus, letting forego an option)
- Design implications inform group recommendation algorithms in a way so that most group members will accept the final outcome

Final Group Responses

The final decision has been made! The names and responses of all the group members are shown below.

Emma Yes

Sara Maybe Yes

James Maybe Yes

Steve Maybe Yes

Your final choice is Yes

Congrats! An unanimous decision has been reached! **On to Something Good** by **Ashley Monroe** is added to the playlist.

Next Step

Playlist

1. **Bright - Lost Kings Remix**
— Echosmith

2. **Catch Us If You Can**
— Elle King

3. **On to Something Good**
— Ashley Monroe

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.