To Flip or Not to Flip: Conformity Effect Across Cultures

Bruce Ferwerda & Christine Bauer

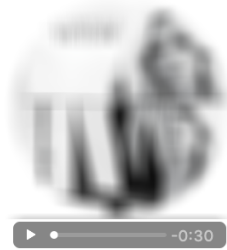**Jönköping University (Sweden) & Utrecht University (The Netherlands)**

Intro

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

Relevance for 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
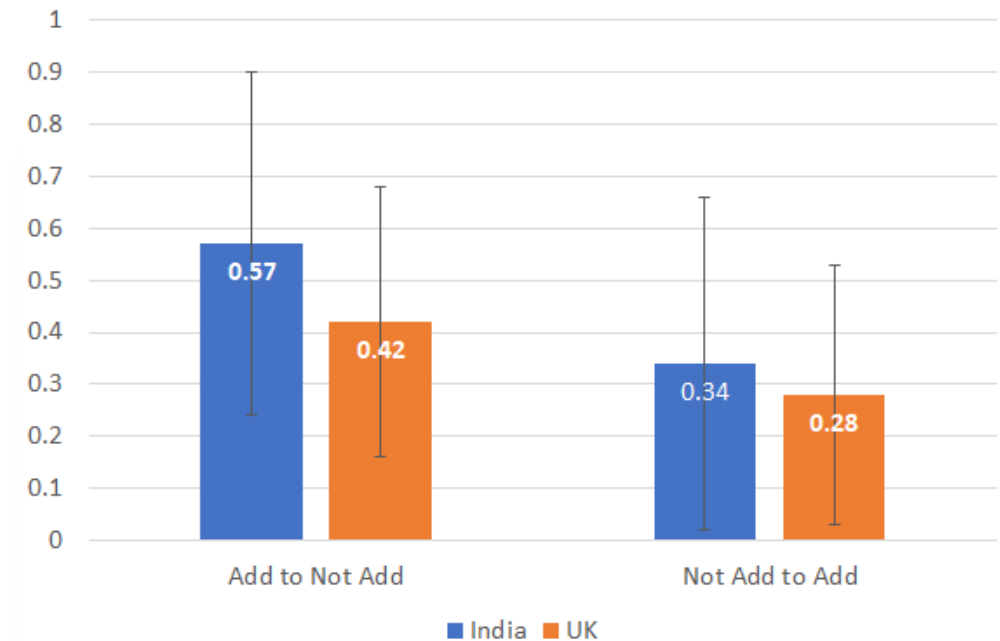- Finding unanimous agreements in group decision-support systems

Study Design

- Online experiment

- 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.

Results & Conclusion

- Stronger conformity tendency in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic ones.

- More pronounced conformity effect when the outcome of the behavior is negative (thus, letting forego an option).

- Design implications:
  e.g., inform group recommendation algorithms in a way so that most group members will accept the final outcome.

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