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Antecedents of User Switching Behavior for SNS: A Push-Pull-Mooring Framework Perspective

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Abstract

With the existence of hundreds of social networking sites (SNSs), losing and gaining popularity among users become inevitable, resulting in the partial or full switching of SNSs. The switching in SNS context refers to either a complete abandonment or substantial decreased use of one SNS, while complete substitution or significant increased use of another (Choi et al., 2013). Although the user's switching behavior in the online world has attracted researchers' mighty attention, the investigation in the context of SNSs remains low. So far, studies have explored user loyalty, engagement, dissatisfaction and attractive alternatives to understand the SNS switching behavior (for ex- Hou & Shiau, 2019; Chang et al., 2014). Recently, Hou and Shiau (2019) attempted to explore push and pull factors, but did not explore the contextual factors. Literature states that shifting may not happen when there are contextual factors involved under the strong push or pull influences (Lee, 1996). Moreover, because the user base of global SNS is large, varied and dynamic (Gong et al., 2020), a switching framework constituting user's personal, social and contextual factors is expected to give a clearer understanding of switching behavior. Therefore, we aim at exploring the various antecedents that act as push, pull and mooring factors, leading to user's SNS switching behavior. The context of our study is switching from Facebook to Instagram, which although belonging to the same mother company, differs substantially in their features. Notably, both are dominant players in the SNS domain; making it interesting to understand this seemingly large shift from one to another (Ghosh, 2017). We draw from a pronounced model in migration literature, the "push-pull-mooring framework" (Lee, 1996). We have identified low enjoyment, cognitive overload and perceived low participation by peer groups as the push factors leading users to move away from Facebook. Pull factors associated with Instagram include perceived enjoyment, peer influence, self-expression, user privacy concern and attractive alternatives. Switching cost and prior switching experience constitute the mooring factors associated with users. We also identify the moderating role of gender since there exist differences in SNS usage patterns of both genders. Going ahead, we will empirically test our conceptual framework using structural equation modelling. Being among the early few studies on SNS switching behavior, we expect to significantly contribute to the Information Systems literature by providing a unified framework of user switching behavior in the domains of online services, in general, and SNSs, in particular. Study also hopes to provide practitioner insights on which SNS features to focus upon for attracting and retaining the users.

Keywords- Online switching behavior, SNS, Facebook, Instagram, Push Pull Mooring (PPM) Migration model

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