

# Users' Switching Intention from Social Media Freemium to Premium

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## Abstract

*To date, social media platforms offer many exclusive or special features for making payments on these premium platforms. This study aims to identify the push, pull, and mooring factors that influence users' intention to switch from freemium to premium social media in Indonesia, drawing on the push-pull-mooring (PPM) theory. An online questionnaire involving 507 social media users in Indonesia and in-depth interviews with 30 users were conducted, with the qualitative data analyzed using content analysis to enrich the quantitative findings. The results show that functionality, advertising intrusiveness, relative advantage, price value, switching cost, and social influence influence switching intention. Theoretically, this study contributes to the PPM framework and the concept of switching intention by extending them to the context of user transitions from freemium to premium social media platforms in Indonesia, a context that has not been previously explored. Practically, the findings provide guidelines for social media platforms to improve premium features and enhance service offerings.*

**Keywords:** social media, freemium, premium, push-pull-mooring, switching intention, Indonesia

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## Introduction

The development of internet technology has also expanded the role of social media in various aspects of life, including education, business, and social movements, making it an integral part of the modern digital ecosystem. The use of social media is now not only for entertainment but also supports productive activities, such as digital marketing, e-commerce, and online community development. One of the key business developments in social media is the rise of social media subscriptions ([Kim et al., 2018](#)). Previously, social media platforms leveraged the results of advertising services that were already personalized using user data ([Li et al., 2024](#)). Other companies pay social media platforms to advertise, and those ads are displayed to users based on the results of the user's data analysis ([Kannen et al., 2024](#)).

Recently, subscription models have emerged as a new business model in which users pay to access exclusive features and content that are not available to free users ([Hayes & Graybeal, 2011](#)). Users are required to pay repeatedly for a specified period, whether monthly or annually ([Li et al., 2024](#)). As part of these subscription models, many social media platforms employ freemium strategies, which combine “free” and “premium” service tiers ([Li et al., 2024](#)). Freemium services offer a free version with limited functionalities, while premium services are the enhanced versions sold to consumers after they are persuaded by the free version ([Tyrväinen & Karjaluoto, 2024](#)). Premium models typically offer a more exclusive, ad-free experience and come with a range of advanced features that enhance the user experience ([Majeed et al., 2022](#)). For example, social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram implement freemium models by providing free access to core functionalities while offering premium subscriptions for features such as ad-free viewing, exclusive content, and verification badges ([OOSGA, 2023](#)). The primary objective of the premium model is to support content creators directly and offer a more immersive and personalized experience to customers ([Kim et al., 2018](#)).

Several previous studies have provided valuable insights into user behavior, monetization strategies, and psychological factors in the context of the freemium business model. Regarding user behavior, [Mäntymäki et al. \(2020\)](#) found that factors such as enjoyment, price value, ubiquity, and the discovery of new content have a significant impact on the intention to upgrade in the context of streaming services, while social connectivity has a slight adverse effect on the intention to retain. From the perspective of monetization strategies, [Tyrväinen and Karjaluoto \(2024\)](#) analyzed approaches adopted in freemium services, while, [Geyer \(2024\)](#) introduced the concept of the social media subscription model, which refers to the shift of business models from those that previously relied on ad-based revenue to paid subscription models, as implemented by Facebook and X ([Li et al., 2024](#)). Focusing on psychological factors, [Lin et al. \(2013\)](#) found that perceived value and service quality positively influence consumers' willingness to pay for online music services, while a strong “free mentality” can hinder users from switching to paid services, indicating that perceived value and quality can encourage subscription intentions despite the barriers posed by a preference for free services.

Although previous studies have explored the adoption of premium services ([Geyer, 2024](#); [Li et al., 2024](#); [Lin et al., 2013](#); [Mäntymäki et al., 2020](#); [Tyrväinen & Karjaluoto, 2024](#)), there is currently no study that analyzes the factors influencing social media users' intentions to switch from freemium to premium services in Indonesia. This study offers a unique contribution by explicitly examining the factors influencing social media users' intentions to switch from freemium to premium services across multiple platforms within the context of a developing country with high demographic diversity. While prior studies have primarily focused on single-platform transitions or developed country contexts, this study analyzes factors influencing switching intentions among Indonesian users, capturing variations across different income levels, educational backgrounds, and usage intensities. Indonesia's unique context, with one of the world's largest populations of internet users and significant demographic diversity, may reveal distinct behavioral patterns that differ from other large-population countries where social media monetization dynamics are influenced by more homogeneous economic or infrastructural conditions ([We Are Social Indonesia, 2024](#)). Moreover, an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence switching intent to this premium service is becoming increasingly important as the social media subscription model trend develops across various global social media platforms.

This study chose the push-pull-mooring (PPM) theory because of its suitability in exploring the factors of user service transfer, as demonstrated in [Bansal \(2005\)](#). Compared to other frameworks, such as the

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which focuses on user acceptance of new technologies, or the Value Adoption Model (VAM), which examines value perceptions during adoption, PPM is more suitable for this study as it explicitly addresses migration and switching behaviors (Ye et al., 2022). PPM groups influencing factors into push, pull, and mooring components, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the drivers, attractors, and inhibitors influencing users' decisions to switch services, which aligns well with the complexity of the transition from freemium to premium services on social media platforms (Ye et al., 2022). Using PPM theory, this study can comprehensively identify and analyze the factors that push, pull, and mooring social media users in Indonesia in the context of the transition to paid services, an area that has never been explored before in the literature.

Prior studies have focused mainly on developed countries, single-platform contexts, or general technology adoption, leaving a gap in understanding cross-platform user transitions to premium services within developing countries with high demographic diversity, such as Indonesia. Therefore, to address this gap, this study seeks to answer the research question: 'How do push, pull, and mooring factors affect Indonesian social media users' intentions to switch from freemium to premium services across multiple platforms? This study focuses on social media platforms widely used in Indonesia that employ a freemium model. These include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp. By not limiting the analysis to specific platforms, this study captures a broader behavioral pattern among Indonesian social media users in the context of shifting from freemium to premium subscription services. Theoretically, this study contributes to the PPM framework and the concept of switching intention by extending them to the context of user transitions from freemium to premium social media platforms in Indonesia, a context that has not been previously explored. This research can also contribute to social media platforms in improving their paid services and increasing customer satisfaction.

## Literature Review

### *Subscription Model*

The subscription model has become a popular business model since the early 2000s, mainly due to the digitization process (Rese & Baier, 2025). This model can be seen in digital product service providers such as streaming service providers (Bischof & Rudolph, 2021), beauty product services (Woo & Ramkumar, 2018), and physical goods sales (Andonova et al., 2021). Users typically sign up for subscriptions to access additional services or specific services for an extended period (classic subscription) or within a specified timeframe (rental subscription) (Rese & Baier, 2025). The subscription model has been in existence since the 17th century and was created to allow the pre-ordering of specific books and articles at a discounted price in advance (Yang & Kwon, 2024). Along with the development of technology and the times, the concept of subscription has evolved into a payment model with a predetermined fee for either unlimited or limited use of a service or feature, typically outlined in contractual terms such as monthly or annual fees (Yang & Kwon, 2024).

One of the businesses that implements the subscription model is social media. Previously, social media platforms made money by displaying personalized ads based on user data (Li et al., 2024). Companies paid social media platforms to display ads to users who had been selected through data analysis (Kannen et al., 2024). In short, before the advent of social media subscriptions, social media platforms generated revenue by selling user data to advertisers (Geyer, 2024). This change in business model marks a shift in the monetization strategy implemented by social media (Lin et al., 2013). Social media platforms are increasingly adopting freemium and premium subscription models to diversify their revenue streams and cater to diverse user preferences (Sciglimpaglia & Raafat, 2022).

The term "freemium" is a combination of "free" and "premium" that describes a strategy where customers can access a basic version of a product or service at no cost and can upgrade to a premium version with additional features by making a payment (Gu et al., 2018). Freemium business models have two distinct phases: attracting as many users as possible to the free offer and then converting a portion of them to premium (Sciglimpaglia & Raafat, 2022). There are many alternatives, but four standard freemium models include offering multi-tiered products, a no-advertising upgrade, a service upgrade, and a full usage trial period (Sciglimpaglia & Raafat, 2022). In the free version of social media,

users can commonly sign up, create a profile, connect with friends, post content, or use messaging services without any charge (Frank, 2023).

Premium service is a paid upgrade within a freemium model that offers customers additional, enhanced, or unrestricted features compared to the free basic version (Gu et al., 2018). Majeed et al. (2022) showed that users value a more personalized and quality experience on social media. In a premium service, social media platforms can offer better features, reduce intrusive ads, and provide a safer experience for their users. For example, on LinkedIn, users can sign up, create a profile, apply for jobs, and connect with other users on the platform at no cost. However, LinkedIn Premium offers additional benefits, such as the ability to become a featured job applicant, view who has viewed your profile, and send more InMail messages (Frank, 2023). YouTube also offers a YouTube Premium service platform, allowing users to pay a fee to avoid advertisements (Geyer, 2024). Reddit also offers a similar service called Reddit Premium, where paying members acquire certain benefits, such as ad-free browsing, exclusive content, and access to specific features (Geyer, 2024).

### ***Push-Pull-Mooring***

Push-pull-mooring (PPM) is a framework often used to study the efforts, intentions, switching behaviors, and social phenomena of sellers of a product or service (Nimako & Ntim, 2013). The PPM theory is a migration theory used to explain the move from one service to another. This theory has been adapted to understand consumer behavior that varies across different contexts by categorizing the factors that influence those decisions into three main elements: push, pull, and mooring (Ye et al., 2022). The PPM theory diverges from the initial theory, the push-pull model developed by Lee (1966) and Bogue (1969), which was later expanded by Moon (1995) to include an additional factor: mooring (Nimako & Ntim, 2013). Lee (1966) explained that two factors influence human migration behavior: push and pull factors. Additionally, other factors that influence migration include distance, cost, and the difficulty of the journey (Lee, 1966). The Mooring factor provides a detailed explanation of the nature of displacement (Moon, 1995). The role of the mooring factor in PPM theory is as a comparative factor that functions as an inhibitor of the migration process (Moon, 1995).

### ***Conceptual Model***

This research model was compiled by referring to studies that include discussions of premium and freemium services, user switching, and the application of push-pull mooring theory (Fu et al., 2021; Liao et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2020; Mäntymäki et al., 2020; O'Brien, 2022; Tyrväinen & Karjaluoto, 2024; Xu et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2022; Zhou & Mi, 2024). Regarding the push factor, we identified dissatisfaction, functionality concerns, privacy concerns, and the intrusiveness of advertising. Regarding the pull factor, we adopted the concepts of perceived value, relative advantage, and price value. In addition, we adopted free mentality, switching cost, and social influence as the mooring factors. The proposed conceptual model is illustrated in Figure 1, which features ten variables and corresponding hypotheses.

The movement of an individual from one service to another is often triggered by dissatisfaction with the previous service. According to Fu et al. (2021), the feelings of discomfort and negative experiences by users encourage them to switch services, specifically to stop using Facebook. User satisfaction correlates positively with a user's desire to use a service (Ye et al., 2022). The higher the user satisfaction with a service, the stronger their desire to continue using it (Ye et al., 2022). Previous research has also demonstrated a positive relationship between user dissatisfaction and their desire to discontinue a service or switch to another (Fu et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2017). User dissatisfaction stems from unmet expectations from the moment users interact directly with the services or features provided by the service provider (Zhou & Mi, 2024). In the context of freemium social media, users may feel dissatisfied and dislike the experience of using freemium social media. It can manifest as anxiety over the limitations of the features provided, disappointment due to unmet usage expectations, numerous distractions such as advertisements that reduce satisfaction, and overall negative experiences that are perceived as detracting from the pleasure that should be obtained from using social media. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

**H1: Dissatisfaction (DS) influences social media switching intention from freemium to premium (SW).**

Functionality is defined as a utility derived from the performance of a service ([Tyrväinen & Karjaluoto, 2024](#)). In a free service, there are usually restrictions or some of the service's functionality is limited ([Tyrväinen & Karjaluoto, 2024](#)). Users tend to leave a service if it has low quality due to the numerous restrictions on features or content that can be enjoyed ([Ye et al., 2022](#)). The shift in use is attributed to fatigue resulting from enduring limitations and low service quality ([Zhou & Wu, 2024](#)). Users switch to other services when they consider the value offered by these services to be greater than that of the services they currently use, due to their perceived benefits and superior features ([Chang & Chiu, 2023](#)). In the context of freemium social media, some of the functions provided in free versions are limited. Therefore, users must upgrade to premium services to gain full access to social media functionality. Then, we suggest the following hypothesis.

**H2: Functionality (FN) influences SW.**

Intrusiveness is a perception that arises due to disturbances in the audience's cognitive processes ([Li et al., 2002](#)). In the freemium business model, the presence of advertising provides benefits by covering the costs incurred in providing services to free users, as well as serving as a strategy to mitigate user dissatisfaction and discomfort ([Dörr et al., 2013](#)). [Tsai \(2023\)](#) also noted that users sometimes feel annoyed and unhappy when ads appear suddenly and block the content they are enjoying or interrupt their interaction with the service. In the context of freemium social media, users must tolerate content that is often mixed with advertisements, such as posts, short videos, or links inserted between the displayed content. These ads disrupt the user experience, reducing the level of enjoyment users derive from consuming content ([Mäntymäki et al., 2020](#)). Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis.

**H3: Intrusiveness of advertising (IA) influences SW.**

Privacy concern is defined as the fear of a breach of the privacy of social services used, typically stemming from the user's inability to control the information posted by others about themselves, as well as the possibility that their identity information has been stolen ([Ye et al., 2022](#)). Excessive violations of user privacy can lead to user fatigue when using social networking services. In other words, users will most likely be encouraged to switch to safer social networking services or stop using social networks ([Ye et al., 2022](#)). In addition to feeling insecure and worried about data leaks, users also sometimes feel uncomfortable knowing that the social media services they use are monitoring their activities ([Dahabiyeh et al., 2024](#)). [Chen et al. \(2022\)](#) also stated that users have concerns about the services they use, as they have a premonition that the service collects personal information without their permission and uses it under the pretext of the applications or functionality. In the context of freemium social media, users often feel that their data security is compromised because these platforms collect and sell user data for personalized advertising, a strategy used by freemium social media to generate revenue ([Geyer, 2024](#)). Based on this, privacy concerns have a positive influence on the switching intention of freemium social media users to premium social media. Thus, we define the following hypothesis.

**H4: Privacy concern (PC) influences SW.**

[Yuen et al. \(2023\)](#) found that high service values can influence consumers' intention to try alternative services provided by their current service providers. In the context of social media, perceived value is defined as a user's evaluation of the benefits received from a service, including quality, experience, convenience, and user satisfaction, as well as the benefits obtained being commensurate with the features and capabilities offered by the freemium version. [Kang et al. \(2023\)](#) investigated consumer acceptance of robots in the hospital service industry and found that perceived value is a crucial factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions. In a study by [Mäntymäki et al. \(2020\)](#) that examined the value difference between free and paid users, it was found that perceived value is the primary factor motivating users to switch from free services to paid services. When users perceive added value or a sense of pleasure and comfort in using a service, they are more likely to switch to that service than to their previous one ([Zhou & Mi, 2024](#)). [Lin et al. \(2020\)](#) argue that a service will be able to attract users if users perceive that the benefits obtained are superior to those of the previous service. In the context

of freemium social media, users evaluate whether the premium version offers added value, such as advanced features, ad-free experiences, and enhanced convenience, compared to the limitations of the freemium version. When users perceive the premium service as offering significant additional value, they are more likely to switch to it. Then, we suggest the following hypothesis.

**H5: Perceived value (PV) influences SW.**

[Lin et al. \(2020\)](#) employed cost-benefit theory to assess the factors influencing the intention to use mobile payment services. In the context of social media, relative advantage is defined as the extent to which users believe that using premium features will offer greater advantages and benefits, such as convenience, efficiency, and effectiveness, compared to not using them. Users are interested in switching to new services because they perceive them as offering greater ease of use compared to previous services, thereby forming a sense of comfort and increasing their intention to switch ([Chen et al., 2022](#)). Services that were previously used by users, when they begin to cause discomfort and dissatisfaction, will lead users to develop a behavior of seeking alternative services ([Tsai, 2023](#)). When users feel comfortable with the alternatives they find, they will choose to switch; conversely, if they do not find a sense of comfort or mediocrity and the service is similar to the previous one, then the user will choose to settle for the previous service ([Tang & Chen, 2020](#)). In the context of freemium social media, users often seek to overcome discomfort by exploring alternative options. Premium social media offers a solution to these issues, making users more inclined to switch to premium services. Next, we propose the following hypothesis.

**H6: Relative advantage (RA) influences SW.**

[Mäntymäki et al. \(2020\)](#) noted that users tend to switch services after knowing the price offered by a service and comparing it with the benefits they obtain. The price factor is a decisive factor for potential users in deciding whether to use the service or not ([Mäntymäki et al., 2020](#)). Users are typically aware of the quality of freemium services and evaluate the prices offered by premium services before deciding to use them ([Tyrväinen & Karjaluoto, 2024](#)). Users tend to seek services that meet their needs, have a positive impact on the user experience, and offer the best value at the most optimal price, while also providing a sense of satisfaction ([Kushwah et al., 2024](#)). In line with this statement, [Venkatesh et al. \(2012\)](#) found that price value is defined as the consumer's cognitive consideration between the perceived benefits of the application and the financial cost of using it. Price value is said to have a positive impact if the benefits obtained from using a technology or service exceed the price that must be paid ([Venkatesh et al., 2012](#)). We contextualized the price value in our study by emphasizing that the premium social media services offered by social media platforms can serve as a pull factor, encouraging users to switch from freemium to premium services. Therefore, we identify the following hypothesis.

**H7: Price value (PR) influences SW.**

Previous studies have shown that switching costs play a significant role in influencing consumers' decisions to either switch or stay with a service or product. [Liao et al. \(2021\)](#) mentioned that switching cost is one of the important mooring factors that arise when a service provider makes changes, including cost, time, and effort. [Ye et al. \(2022\)](#) have identified that switching costs are not only financial but also involve aspects of time and adaptation efforts. The switching cost is defined as the financial and psychological costs incurred when switching from one option to another ([Sekarputri et al., 2023](#)). Users tend to be cautious when considering the psychological costs, such as time and effort, associated with subscribing to a service provider ([Chang & Chiu, 2023](#)). It includes the subscription costs that must be incurred, the time required to learn new features, and the effort needed to adapt to different interfaces. Within the context of this study, switching costs can encompass several key dimensions that influence consumer decision-making. These include the subscription fees that must be paid, the time required to learn new features, and the effort needed to adapt to different interfaces. The higher the switching cost, the lower the user's intention to switch to other services. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis.

**H8: Switching cost (SC) influences SW.**

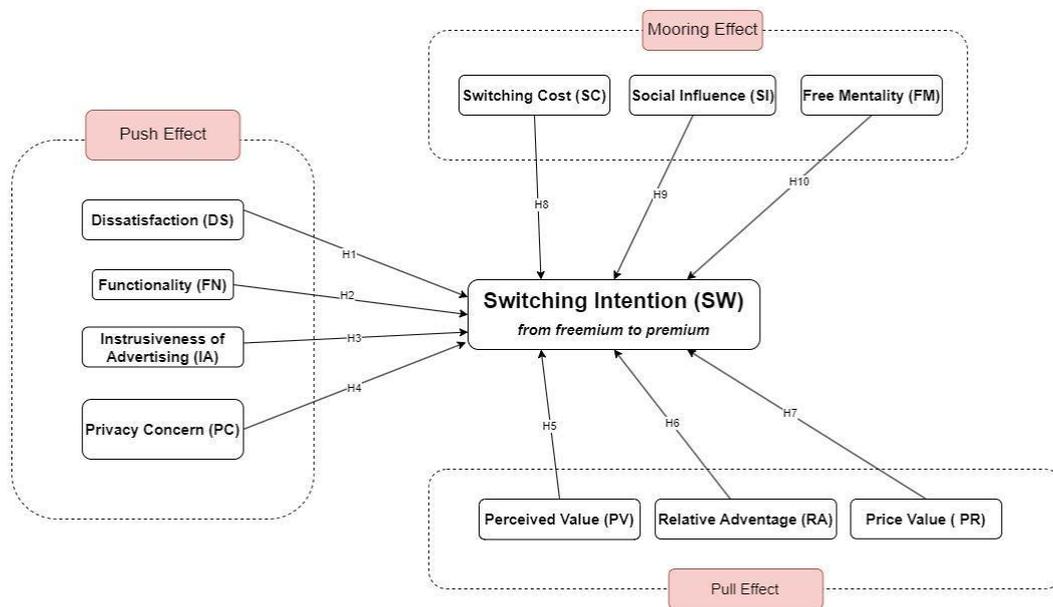
Social influence is defined as the effect caused by the environment or people around the user that encourages them to form a particular behavior ([Chang & Chiu, 2023](#)). When a user learns that one of

their friends is using or adopting a new or recommended technology, such as generative AI, they tend to turn to it instead of traditional search engines (Zhou & Wu, 2024). In a study by Ye et al. (2022) on the switching intention of live-streaming e-commerce users, it was found that social influence refers to the impact exerted by social circles, such as friends, family, and peers, on an individual’s decision to switch to digital platforms. The study found that social influence can change individual and product perceptions, which in turn affect switching intention. Similar findings were explained by Lin et al. (2013) on the intention to pay for online music services, which confirms the important role of close social contact in shaping the adoption behavior of new technologies. In the context of transitioning from the free version to the premium version of social media, social influence has the potential to be a key factor in determining the perceived value of a service based on the experiences and opinions shared by users through their social networks. Social influence not only has a direct impact on switching intention but also plays a strategic role in shaping the perceived value of services (Lin et al., 2020). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis.

**H9: Social influence (SI) influences SW.**

The free mentality is a deep belief that digital content should be available for free (Lin et al., 2013). This belief is reinforced by the widespread availability of free services on the internet that influence consumer expectations and behavior towards digital platforms (Lin et al., 2013). A free mentality is also defined as the belief that all content available on the internet has the status of a public good, where no one is excluded from its use (O’Brien, 2022). The free mentality is the biggest obstacle in the process of subscribing users to online content, as it suggests that everything available online can be enjoyed for free (Liu et al., 2023). Users believe that a good service should provide more value and benefits even if they have no desire to pay, since the majority of online service providers offer it for free (Kim et al., 2018). In this context, we assumed that a free mentality would have an adverse effect on switching intention from the free version of social media services to the paid version, as users with a stronger free mentality are more likely to resist paying for online services. Then, we define the following hypothesis.

**H10: Free mentality (FM) influences SW.**



**Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model**

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

The mixed-methods approach applied in this study combines a quantitative approach, utilizing an online questionnaire, with a qualitative approach involving interviews. Specifically, the qualitative phase was

conducted to explore why specific hypotheses were supported while others were not and to capture respondents' perspectives that quantitative data could not fully explain. By integrating these two methods, this study generated richer insights into the concepts explored (Creswell, 2014). This study stage encompasses problem formulation, literature review, research model design, quantitative instrument development, readability testing, pilot study, quantitative data collection, quantitative data analysis, qualitative instrument design, qualitative data collection, qualitative data analysis, and conclusion.

The criteria for respondents in this study are Indonesian citizens aged 17 years or older who use premium social media and have a basic understanding of social media. Beyond the age and familiarity criteria, no additional exclusion criteria were applied; however, efforts were made to include respondents from diverse demographics, including educational backgrounds, genders, and ages, to enhance the representativeness of the data. To ensure diversity, we distributed the survey across multiple social media platforms (LINE, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter) to reach respondents from various regions in Indonesia. We monitored incoming responses to ensure a balance in gender, age groups, and educational backgrounds. For the qualitative phase, participants were recruited from among the survey respondents who indicated willingness to participate in follow-up interviews.

#### *Data Collection*

Before distributing the questionnaire, a readability test was conducted to assess the extent to which prospective respondents could understand the content and ensure that the instrument was suitable for use. The readability test was conducted over five days, from September 16 to September 20, 2024, involving nine respondents. The results of the readability test consisted of suggestions from respondents regarding aspects that needed improvement in the questionnaire, such as sentence readability. Based on this feedback, we evaluated and revised the questionnaire before distributing it to the larger group of respondents.

A pilot study questionnaire was then conducted with 30 respondents. The purpose of this pilot study was to obtain the Cronbach's alpha (CA) value as a measure of the internal consistency of the questionnaire developed for this research. An ideal Cronbach's alpha value should be above 0.7 (Hair, 2014). The pilot study yielded a total CA value of 0.885, indicating good internal consistency; therefore, we proceeded to the primary data collection phase.

The questionnaire data collection process was conducted over 32 days, from October 11 to November 11, 2024, and resulted in the collection of 570 respondents. In quantitative research, a common rule of thumb for determining the minimum sample size is the "10-times rule". This rule suggests that the sample size should be at least 10 times the number of indicators used to measure a construct in a research model (Hair et al., 2011). This study employed 43 indicators, indicating a minimum required sample size of 430. Therefore, the sample size of 570 respondents exceeds this requirement, ensuring the adequacy of the sample for PLS-SEM analysis. Table 1 presents the demographic summary of respondents who completed the questionnaire.

Qualitative data collection is carried out to validate and support the hypotheses that have been tested. The process of collecting qualitative data involves conducting interviews. The interview was conducted both offline and online, involving a total of thirty respondents. Data saturation was used as the guiding principle in determining the adequacy of the sample size for the qualitative phase. We found that after approximately 25 interviews, no new significant themes or insights emerged, indicating that data saturation had been reached (Guest et al., 2006). An additional five interviews were conducted to confirm the consistency of the findings and ensure robustness, bringing the total to 30 interviews, which were deemed sufficient to capture the intended range of insights in this study. Data collection took place from November 18 to November 22, 2024, and all respondents provided written consent to participate in this study.

**Table 1. Summary of Questionnaire Respondent Demographics**

Demographics		Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Man	256	44.91%
	Woman	262	45.96%
Age	17-25 years old	246	43.16%
	26-35 years old	212	37.19%
	36-45 years old	49	8.60%
	> 45 years old	9	1.58%
Education Level	Elementary/junior high/high school/equivalent	86	15.09%
	Diploma	83	14.56%
	Bachelor	326	57.19%
	Postgraduate	24	4.21%
Domicile	Greater Jakarta	218	38.25%
	Java (Non-Greater Jakarta)	135	23.68%
	Bali	42	7.37%
	Sumatra	66	11.58%
	Kalimantan	38	6.67%
	NTT/NTB	14	2.46%
	Maluku	3	0.53%
	Others	3	0.53%
Work	Student	150	26%
	Self-employed	85	14.91%
	Private employees	169	29.65%
	Civil servants	46	8.07%
	Stated-owned employees	49	8.60%
	Police	11	1.93%
	Unemployment	3	0.53%
	Others	6	1.06%
Social media used	Instagram	427	74.26%
	Whatsapp	396	68.87%
	Line	222	38.61%
	TikTok	343	59.65%
	Twitter	263	45.74%
	Others	14	2.43%

*Data Analysis*

We analyzed the questionnaire data using the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. The PLS-SEM was chosen because this study is exploratory, and PLS-SEM is capable of modeling complex cause-and-effect relationships between latent variables (Martinez et al., 2021). The tools used in data processing and analysis include SMART-PLS version 3 which is used to process data from outlier tests and common method bias tests using the PLS-SEM method, IBM SPSS Statistics

25 is also used to conduct outlier tests and common method bias tests, and Google Sheets which is used to accommodate data from the use of the SMART-PLS version 3 and IBM SPSS Statistics 25 applications.

Finally, the interview data were analyzed using the content analysis method, which consists of four systematic stages. The first stage, decontextualization, involved coding the data to identify meaning units from each transcript (Bengtsson, 2016). The second stage, recontextualization, involved reorganizing any remaining data that had not yet been assigned meaning units and determining whether these data could be formed into new meaning units or should be excluded (Burnard, 1995). In the third stage, categorization, the researchers grouped similar meaning units into the same categories to identify patterns within the data (Burnard, 1995). The final stage, compilation, involved documenting the established categories along with the number of meaning units within each category and its subcategories (Berg, 2001).

**Research Instruments**

The questionnaire is divided into three main sections: respondent validity, respondent demographic data, and questions related to the research topic. In the validity section, respondents will be asked several questions, including the length of time they use social media, the type of social media they use, whether they use premium social media, and the type of premium social media they use. In the respondent demographic section, information related to the respondent’s data will be collected. In the question section related to the research topic, there will be 43 questions addressing the push, pull, and mooring factors that influence respondents’ interest in switching to premium social media services based on predetermined variables. These items were adapted from prior literature (Cao et al., 2020; Fu et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2013; Mäntymäki et al., 2020; O’Brien, 2022; Tyrväinen & Karjaluoto, 2024; Xu et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2022; Zhou & Li, 2024; Zhou & Mi, 2024) and are listed in Appendix A. Respondents were asked to provide answers to each question using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree (Joshi et al., 2015).

The interview questions were developed based on research variables, including hypotheses that were supported and that were not supported in the quantitative phase. Semi-structured interview items were prepared and administered to each participant. Using a semi-structured approach allowed for flexibility in probing further into participants’ responses while ensuring that all key constructs relevant to the study were systematically covered (Inglethorpe, 2024). The interview questions are presented in Appendix B.

**Results**

The average variance extracted (AVE) test is used to assess the extent to which a construct accounts for the majority of the variance in indicators (Hair et al., 2021). According to Hair et al. (2021), the minimum acceptable AVE value in a study is 0.5 or more. Cronbach’s Alpha (CA) measures reliability by assessing the intercorrelations among the observed indicator variables. Additionally, composite reliability (CR) testing is conducted to confirm construct reliability, with a minimum acceptable value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). Table 2 describes the values of AVE, CR, and CA. The results in Table 2 indicate that all variables meet the requirements for reliability and convergent validity, with AVE values exceeding 0.5 and CR and CA values above the recommended threshold of 0.7.

**Table 2. AVE, CR, and CA Values**

Variables	AVE	CR	CA
DS	0.697	0.902	0.855
SHE	0.717	0.910	0.869
PV	0.802	0.942	0.918
PR	0.701	0.903	0.857
PC	0.715	0.909	0.867

Variables	AVE	CR	CA
RA	0.704	0.905	0.860
SW	0.776	0.912	0.856
FM	0.658	0.885	0.827
FN	0.810	0.945	0.922
THE	0.684	0.896	0.846
SC	0.811	0.945	0.922

Discriminant validity ensures that each construct is unique and capable of capturing phenomena that are not represented by other constructs in the model (Hair et al., 2017). We employed cross-loading and the Fornell-Larcker criterion to assess the discriminant validity of the model (Hair et al., 2017). The Fornell-Larcker criterion test involves comparing the square root of the AVE value with the correlation between constructs (Hair et al., 2017). The square root value of AVE for each construct must be greater than the correlation between that construct and the other construct (Hair et al., 2017). However, due to the limitations of both methods, this study also conducted an optional evaluation using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio value to obtain more reliable discriminant validity test results (Hair et al., 2017). The results of cross-loading are presented in Appendix C, and the Fornell-Larcker test results are included in Appendix D. HTMT is defined as the mean of hetero-trait-hetero-method correlation, and HTMT values below 0.85 or 0.90 are considered to meet the discriminant validity test (Henseler et al., 2015). Henseler et al. (2015) recommend a threshold of 0.85 when the constructs in the model are conceptually distinct and 0.90 when the constructs are highly conceptually similar. The results of the HTMT test are presented in Appendix E.

After testing the path coefficient, the study proceeded with a structural model test to assess the model's predictability using the R<sup>2</sup> determination coefficient, which was calculated through the PLS algorithm. R<sup>2</sup> is defined as a measure of the predictive strength of the research model, calculated as the square of the correlation between the actual value and the predicted value of a given endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2017). The interpretation of the R<sup>2</sup> value is as follows: values above 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75, respectively, indicate the ability of independent variables to explain the dependent variable in the research model, which are interpreted as weak, medium, and strong predictive abilities (Hair et al., 2017). The results of the coefficient of determination are presented in Table 3. The hypothesis test is based on the p-values and t-statistic values of the path coefficient test. A summary of the results of the hypothesis test is presented in Table 4.

**Table 3. Result Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Description
SW	0.523	0.513	Strong

**Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results**

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Description
H1	0.083	0.082	0.049	1.704	0.089	Rejected
H2	0.127	0.125	0.045	2.793	0.005	Accepted
H3	0.100	0.103	0.051	1.973	0.049	Accepted
H4	0.100	0.100	0.055	1.807	0.071	Rejected

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Description
H5	0.048	0.047	0.048	0.985	0.325	Rejected
H6	0.145	0.143	0.046	3.154	0.002	Accepted
H7	0.111	0.112	0.053	2.114	0.035	Accepted
H8	0.127	0.124	0.053	2.402	0.017	Accepted
H9	0.124	0.126	0.052	2.367	0.018	Accepted
H10	0.052	0.054	0.053	0.991	0.322	Rejected

## Discussions

This study found that H1 was rejected, indicating that the influence of dissatisfaction on social media switching intention was not significant. This result is not in line with [Xu et al. \(2021\)](#), who found that dissatisfaction affects the intention to switch platforms in the context of game streaming. Similarly, [Yoon and Lim \(2021\)](#) demonstrated that, in the context of e-banking, user dissatisfaction with existing services has a significant impact on their desire to switch to alternative bank services that may offer a better experience or lower fees. [Zhou and Mi \(2024\)](#) also argue that user dissatisfaction stems from unmet expectations from the moment users interact directly with the services or features provided by the service provider. Finally, [Tang and Chen \(2020\)](#) identified that dissatisfaction with the speed and quality of content can significantly affect users' intentions to seek out more responsive and innovative alternatives in the context of microblogging brands. The overall study highlights that dissatisfaction is a key factor that prompts users to reevaluate their choices and seek out services that better meet their needs and expectations. However, this study showed that many users found the free version of social media to be still reliable for daily use and satisfactory. Users have no problem using the free version of social media because it is sufficient for their daily needs, primarily when not used by Instagram celebrities or referred to as "selebgrams." Based on the results of the qualitative analysis, premium social media users found freemium social media to be satisfactory, aligning with the quantitative finding that dissatisfaction in freemium services does not influence switching intention. However, some of them were bothered by the ads ("*Freemium social media was still satisfactory, but I am a bit annoyed with ads, so I decided to switch to premium*" - [NW2]). In addition, access to all features is another reason for users to switch even though freemium social media is enough ("*I want to get the full experience from using the social media so, in the end, it is the one that encourages me to buy or use the premium*" - [NW9]).

This study also found that functionality has a significant influence on switching intention (H2). This finding aligns with [Mäntymäki et al. \(2020\)](#), who found that features that comprehensively meet users' needs not only retain customers on freemium services but also increase the perceived value of the price they receive. In this context, innovative and exclusive features can be a key determinant in consumers' decisions to stick with premium services. Users tend to leave a service if it has low quality due to the numerous restrictions on features or content that can be enjoyed ([Ye et al., 2022](#)). This concept is similar to the alternative attractiveness theory ([Sun et al., 2017](#)). Alternative attractiveness is a concept in consumer behavior theory that shows how users' perception of available alternatives can influence their decision to switch ([Sun et al., 2017](#)). In other words, when a product or service offers adequate features and meets user expectations, the likelihood of users switching to another product or service decreases. [Chang and Chiu \(2023\)](#) also argued that users tend to switch to other services when they perceive that these services offer better value, benefits, and features than the ones they are currently using. In the context of social media usage, if the free version has significant feature limitations, users are likely to switch to the premium version, which offers more features and capabilities. The results of this study make a consistent contribution to the understanding of how functionality limitations can be an important factor in shaping user intentions to switch services. This study highlights the importance for social

media platform providers to enhance the value of their premium features, ensuring that users perceive the additional cost as worthwhile. The qualitative findings provide nuance to these quantitative results, illustrating how the desire for enhanced functionality motivates users' decisions to switch to premium services. For instance, users reported that the ability to access premium features for content promotion was a key driver in their decision to upgrade (*"I really need the ads feature to boost the content I post so that people can see it, it drives me to move to premium social media"* - [NW1]). In addition, user needs and desires for a specific feature drive their intention to switch (*"Because there is a need and desire that drives me to use an ad-free feature, so it encourages me to switch to premium"* - [NW10]).

The intrusiveness of advertising also significantly affects social media switching intention (H3). If the advertisement makes it difficult for users to enjoy the service, then it can be considered intrusive (Li et al., 2002). Tsai (2023) noted that users sometimes feel annoyed when using social media services, as ads appear suddenly and block the content they are enjoying. In the context of freemium social media, users are required to tolerate content that is frequently interspersed with advertisements, including posts, short videos, or links embedded within the displayed content. These advertisements disrupt the user experience and diminish the enjoyment users derive from consuming content (Mäntymäki et al., 2020). The qualitative findings align with the quantitative results, reinforcing that the intrusiveness of advertising has a significant impact on social media switching intention. Respondents reported that the ads on freemium social media are very disruptive (*"Since I use a music platform primarily for entertainment, I find it intolerable when numerous advertisements appear, as they are disruptive and annoying. Sometimes, even horror-themed ads are shown, which can make listening at night feel tense and uncomfortable"* - [NW11]). In addition, the frequency of advertisements on freemium social media is perceived as quite high (*"After every 2–3 songs, 15–30 second ads appear that cannot be skipped. On YouTube, for a one-hour video, there can be 3–4 ad phases, and each phase can have two ads"* - [NW19]).

Additionally, privacy concerns do not significantly influence switching intentions (H4). This result contradicts Ye et al. (2022), who suggest that excessive violations of user privacy can lead to user fatigue when using social networking services, and users are more likely to switch to safer social networking services or stop using social networks. Supporting this statement, users not only feel insecure and worried about potential data leaks but also experience discomfort knowing that the social media services they use may be monitoring their activities (Dahabiyeh et al., 2024). Our findings suggest that users lack awareness of the confidentiality of their data, which has no impact on the perceived value of the benefits they seek when considering switching to premium social media services. Although personal data protection regulations have been established through Law Number 27 of 2022, this may be because, in some cases in Indonesia, users have not encountered issues related to data leaks from the social media platforms they use. Consequently, users perceive that the free version of social media is sufficient to protect the confidentiality of their data, which does not discourage them from remaining on the free version rather than switching to the premium version. The qualitative findings align with the quantitative results, showing that privacy concerns do not significantly influence switching intentions. For instance, users expressed limited concern about the security of their personal information, indicating that the type of data they share on these platforms is perceived as low-risk (*"Honestly, I am not too worried, maybe because this is a music platform, so the information I input is also not very important"* - [NW11]). In addition, users believe that social media platforms are capable of providing extra security for their data (*"I believe that big platforms like YouTube can prevent data leaks"* - [NW12]).

H5 in this study was rejected, indicating that perceived value did not have a significant effect on switching intention. This result is not in line with Yuen et al. (2023), who examined the influence of technology characteristics and relational engagement strategies on crowdsourced delivery (CD) platforms. They found that the perceived high value of a service can influence consumers' intention to use alternative services offered by their current service providers. Mäntymäki et al. (2020) assert that perceived value is a key factor motivating users to upgrade from free to paid services, as it reflects the evaluation of the benefits of accessing wider content at a cost-effective level. Similarly, Kang et al. (2023) found that perceived value is a crucial factor influencing consumer purchase decisions. In the context of premium social media, the premium version indeed offers additional value and benefits that

surpass those of freemium services, such as exclusive features and a more enjoyable user experience. However, the findings of this study indicate that perceived value did not have a significant effect on switching intention, suggesting that even though users may recognize the benefits of premium social media, this factor is insufficient to motivate them to transition from free to premium services. The qualitative findings add nuance to the rejected H5 by showing that perceived value alone may not directly drive switching intention because users still weigh the price when evaluating the worth of premium social media services. For example, some respondents perceived the price of premium social media as reasonable given the benefits they received, reflecting a positive perceived value (“*Yes, it is equivalent to the benefits obtained, so it influenced me to switch*” - [NW7]). However, other users viewed the price as too expensive and struggled to see sufficient value in the service to justify switching (“*In my personal opinion, for Twitter, it is quite expensive, and perhaps that is why not many people use Twitter Blue*” - [NW8]).

This study also found that relative advantage has a significant impact on social media switching intention (H6). This finding is consistent with [Lin et al. \(2020\)](#), who found that the relative advantage of a product or service, such as the availability of advanced features, can enhance users’ perceived value. Similarly, [Wang et al. \(2021\)](#) stated that users are likely to switch to a different service if it offers greater advantages, benefits, and value compared to the service they are currently using. [Cheng et al. \(2019\)](#) further explained that relative advantage has a positive effect on users’ switching intentions. In the context of premium social media, relative advantage, such as additional features, ease of use, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of using features from premium social media, can influence their intention to switch from a freemium social media to the premium version. The qualitative findings align with the significant H6 result by illustrating that users perceive premium social media as more effective and efficient, reinforcing how relative advantage motivates their intention to switch (“*In my opinion, premium features are quite effective and efficient in supporting my activities, I get ease of access and better performance. It made me feel quite satisfied and interested in switching to premium.*” - [NW3]). Additionally, users expressed that the features available on premium social media were sufficient to encourage them to switch to premium services (“*On Spotify, navigating between songs is smooth, and on YouTube, there are no advertisements, so that is why I chose to switch*” - [NW21]).

This study found that price value has a significant effect on social media switching intention (H7). This result suggests that users tend to switch services after learning the price offered by a service and comparing it with the benefits they get. The price factor is a decisive factor for potential users in deciding whether to use the service or not ([Mäntymäki et al., 2020](#)). [Tyrväinen and Karjaluoto \(2024\)](#) explain that users are usually aware of the quality of freemium services or premium services and evaluate the prices offered by these services before deciding to use them. Users tend to seek services that meet their needs, provide a positive user experience, and offer an optimal price, ensuring they do not feel a sense of loss ([Kushwah et al., 2024](#)). In the context of premium social media, users often feel that the prices offered are worth the benefits obtained from the additional features. Thus, the price offered by social media, particularly when considering the cost of switching in relation to the benefits and advantages provided, can serve as a factor attracting users to subscribe to premium services. The qualitative findings align with the significant H7 result by showing that users view the price of premium social media as justified by the benefits received, reinforcing the price value’s role in switching intention (“*I think it is very beneficial, but for Twitter Blue, it is still fifty-fifty, I would say. Price was a significant consideration for me*” - [NW8]). Additionally, some users also feel that the cost of subscribing to premium services is not too expensive when considering the benefits they receive (“*When I feel that the price I pay aligns with the service and quality provided, price becomes an important consideration in my opinion, because if the price is too high, it makes the service not worth it*” - [NW1]).

This study also found that switching costs significantly influence social media switching intention (H8). This finding aligns with the notion that users tend to be cautious when considering the psychological costs, such as time and energy, associated with subscribing to a service provider ([Chang & Chiu, 2023](#)). Switching costs also influence the tendency of live streaming e-commerce (LSE) users not to switch to a new platform, as they must invest time and effort in learning how to use it ([Ye et al., 2022](#)). [Guo \(2022\)](#) also asserts that switching costs can significantly influence user decisions. They found that in addition to financial costs, the emotional and psychological aspects also influenced switching

intentions. In the context of this study, users are concerned about cost, time, or effort, as these factors are considerations in their decision to switch services. The qualitative findings provide nuance to H8 by demonstrating that switching costs have a significant impact on switching intention. The effort required to switch was perceived as minimal and outweighed by the ease of use and desire to access premium features (*“The process was not too complicated, I just entered my payment information, and it was automatically deducted every month. So, there was no extra effort”* - [NW1]). Furthermore, they also felt that the effort involved was far less than the benefits gained (*“In my opinion, the effort required was minimal and not burdensome, as subscribing and unsubscribing were easy and even easier than expected”* - [NW30]).

Then, H9 was accepted in this study, indicating that social influence has a significant effect on social media switching intention. This result aligns with [Ye et al. \(2022\)](#), who found that positive recommendations and reviews from friends or family can encourage users to try new platforms. This social influence suggests that people tend to be influenced by their environment in making decisions regarding the use of services. Similarly, a study by [Zhou and Li \(2024\)](#) showed that when a user discovers that one of their friends is using generative AI, they tend to switch to generative AI from traditional search engines. [Chang and Chiu \(2023\)](#) also demonstrate that family and friends often have a greater influence than the benefits and advantages offered by the service provider. In the context of this study, social media influencers frequently emphasize the benefits and superior features of subscribing to premium versions, which can significantly influence user perceptions and intentions. Given the strong influence that influencers have on their followers, their recommendations can serve as a valuable reference for users who are considering upgrading to premium services. The qualitative findings align with the significant H9 result, highlighting that recommendations from friends, family, and influencers effectively encourage switching to premium social media (*“Because many friends and family use the same feature, I was arguably influenced, and it felt odd not to use it myself”* - [NW5]; *“The recommendation actually from my aunt, who is not even the person I am closest to”* - [NW25]).

Finally, H10 was rejected in this study, indicating that the free mentality was not a significant predictor of social media switching intention. This finding is not in line with [Liu et al. \(2023\)](#), who stated that the free mentality is often considered the biggest obstacle to user subscription to online content, as it reflects the belief that everything online should be available without charge. Users may also believe that high-quality services should provide more value and benefits even if they are unwilling to pay, given that many online service providers offer services for free ([Kim et al., 2018](#)). Additionally, [O’Brien \(2022\)](#) demonstrated in a study on individual intentions to purchase digital journalism content that the free mentality can influence service switching. These prior studies indicate that users often believe music and digital news are types of content that should remain free. However, in the context of this study, users recognize that the features and services offered by premium social media are not always provided for free. Users understand that there are considerations, such as the need for company revenue, making it reasonable for them to pay when subscribing to premium social media services. The qualitative findings align with the rejected H10, indicating that users generally accept paying for premium features, which suggests that the free mentality does not influence switching intention. They believe that premium social media offers better benefits than freemium social media, so they are willing to pay for the premium service (*“I feel that premium social media offers more value, so I am encouraged to use it”* - [NW3]). Another respondent also justified that premium subscription fees serve as a source of income for the platform (*“Yes, no matter what the platform is, it definitely needs capital, so not everything can be free, and the company needs money to continue to grow”* - [NW17]).

## Implications

### *Theoretical Implications*

This study makes a theoretical contribution by extending the push-pull-mooring (PPM) framework to examine switching intention specifically in the context of freemium-to-premium transitions on social media platforms in Indonesia. This area has not been previously explored. By applying the PPM framework, this study identifies and analyzes the factors influencing users’ intentions to switch from freemium to premium social media services, thus advancing understanding of switching behavior in the

social media domain. Additionally, the findings of this study both confirm and contrast with prior research, offering nuanced insights that enrich the literature on platform-based switching behavior.

Regarding push factors, the findings demonstrate that, contrary to previous studies ([Cheng et al., 2009](#); [Xu et al., 2021](#); [Yoon & Lim, 2021](#)), dissatisfaction does not influence switching intention, suggesting that dissatisfaction may not universally drive switching across service contexts. Similarly, privacy concerns were found not to influence switching, which contrasts with the findings of [Ye et al. \(2020\)](#). Meanwhile, limited functionality and advertising intrusiveness align with [Mäntymäki et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Li et al. \(2002\)](#), respectively, confirming that these factors encourage switching when users face feature limitations and disruptive ads. For pull factors, the study reinforces the importance of relative advantage and price value in encouraging switching, consistent with prior literature, which emphasizes how perceived additional benefits and acceptable pricing drive user decisions during the transition to premium. In terms of mooring factors, this study aligns with [Ye et al. \(2022\)](#) in finding that social influence significantly drives switching intention. It extends prior models by conceptualizing switching costs beyond monetary price to include time and effort, offering a more comprehensive view of user considerations. Finally, the finding that the free mentality does not affect switching intentions contrasts with [O'Brien \(2022\)](#), suggesting that users may recognize the legitimacy of paid premium features on social media, refining the role of free mentality in digital service transitions.

### ***Practical Implications***

The results of this study offer practical implications for social media users, recommending that they make informed decisions before switching to premium services. Based on the results of the hypothesis test, dissatisfaction with freemium social media services is not the primary reason users switch to premium services. Social media users believe that social media platforms should offer paid features to provide more benefits. Therefore, they should carefully assess the specific benefits offered, the costs involved, and whether subscribing to premium services will effectively address the limitations they experience with freemium social media. To facilitate this, social media platforms can provide a “Premium Value Preview” feature, a clear, side-by-side comparison table showing freemium vs. premium benefits (e.g., ad frequency, access to exclusive tools like advanced analytics or scheduling, download capabilities, content quality improvements), estimated time saved by going ad-free, and clear subscription cancellation policies. This feature will help users evaluate whether upgrading will truly address the shortcomings they experience in freemium use.

Additionally, for social media platforms, this study recommends focusing on two key aspects: pricing and the development of premium features. Social media platforms should offer competitive subscription prices that align with the benefits provided. For premium feature development, social media platforms are encouraged to prioritize ad-free experiences, offline access, exclusive content, or advanced tools (e.g., analytics dashboards, content boosters), and responsive customer support. These features address common freemium limitations while providing added value, making premium subscriptions more attractive to users.

### **Conclusion**

This study found that push, pull, and mooring affect users' intention to switch to premium social media. The push factor that has a strong influence on the user's intention to switch is the functionality of a premium social media service. Only dissatisfaction and privacy concerns were found as push factors that did not affect the user's desire to switch. The pull factors that have a high influence on the user's intention to switch are relative advantage and price value. Then, perceived value becomes a variable that does not influence the user's desire to switch to a premium social media service. The mooring factors that have a high influence on users' intention to switch are switching costs and social influence. This study concludes that costs, in terms of time and effort, are not one of the factors that negatively affect users' decisions to switch services. It also demonstrates that the influence of family, relatives, and colleagues can help users transition to premium social media services. Free mentality is a variable that does not affect the user's desire to switch services.

The limitations of this study include its dominance by respondents aged 17-25 years (43.16%) and residents of Greater Jakarta (23.68%). Future research can compare the results of this study with those of other developing countries to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and user behavior differences between countries in their decision-making processes for switching to premium social media. Additionally, the study may be subject to self-selection bias, as respondents participating in the survey are likely to be those already aware of or interested in premium social media models, potentially influencing their responses. We also recognize that the majority of participants utilized premium features on social media, such as Instagram Exclusive Content (29.39%) and Instagram Verified (20.17%), followed by X Premium and Facebook Verified. This data suggests a possible overrepresentation of Instagram users with premium features in the sample, which may affect the applicability of the findings to other platforms and premium models. Lastly, this research did not account for the actual use of premium features, focusing instead on users' intentions to switch to premium services. From a theoretical viewpoint, future studies could employ models that connect intention with actual behavior, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) or the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Furthermore, including actual usage statistics and subscription histories could enhance model validation and deliver a clearer understanding of user behavior regarding the adoption of premium social media services.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A. Measurement Items Questionnaire

Code	Measurement Items	References
FN1	I believe that a social media premium improves the platform's functionality by maximizing all available features, thereby enhancing the user experience.	<a href="#">Tyrväinen &amp; Karjaluoto (2024)</a>
FN2	I feel that social media premium offers a range of features that are more adequate and make me feel comfortable, so that it is more than just a product that I buy.	
FN3	I feel that if I do not subscribe to the social media premium, it will reduce the effectiveness of the service I get	
FN4	I believe that the features of social media premium can assist me in various ways to find information.	
DS1	I feel less satisfied with my overall experience using freemium social media.	<a href="#">Ye et al. (2022)</a>
DS2	I am not happy with my overall experience using freemium social media.	
DS3	I was frustrated with my overall experience using freemium social media.	<a href="#">Fu et al. (2021)</a>
DS4	I feel uncomfortable with the overall experience of using freemium social media.	
PC1	I was worried that the freemium social media was collecting my personal information without notice.	<a href="#">Ye et al. (2022)</a>
PC2	I am worried that the personal information I provide to the freemium social media is being misused.	
PC3	I was worried that other irresponsible people would find my personal information on the freemium social media.	<a href="#">Lin et al. (2020)</a>
PC4	I was concerned that the social media freemium I was using did not offer sufficient protection for my personal information.	
IA1	I felt that ads on social media freemium services distracted me from the main content I wanted to see and enjoy, making me consider switching to a paid service.	<a href="#">Mäntymäki et al. (2020)</a>

Code	Measurement Items	References
IA2	I found that ads on freemium social media platforms bothered me, making it difficult to enjoy the main content I wanted to see, and I considered switching to a different service.	and <a href="#">Tsai (2023)</a>
IA3	I felt that the ads displayed on freemium social media made me uncomfortable, so I decided to switch to a different service.	
IA4	I feel like the feature on social media freemium made me consider leaving social media freemium.	
PV1	I feel benefited by the value given when subscribing to the social media premium.	<a href="#">Lin et al. (2020)</a>
PV2	I feel that subscribing to social media premium is worth the benefits.	
PV3	Overall, I am satisfied with the value of the service provided by Social Media Premium.	<a href="#">Zhou &amp; Mi (2024)</a>
PV4	I believe that this social media premium has been beneficial in meeting my needs and desires from using social media.	
RA1	Premium social media has more advantages than freemium.	<a href="#">Lin et al. (2020)</a>
RA2	The additional features that social media premium offers provide enough more value to make me want to switch services or give it a try.	<a href="#">Lin et al. (2020)</a>
RA3	Premium social media is more efficient than freemium.	<a href="#">Ye et al. (2022)</a>
RA4	Premium social media is more effective than freemium social media.	
PR1	The prices offered by social media premium have good economic value.	<a href="#">Mäntymäki et al. (2020)</a>
PR2	I am satisfied with the subscription price offered by Social Media Premium.	
PR3	I feel like the price of a social media premium subscription is too high, considering what it gives as an advantage.	<a href="#">Tyrväinen &amp; Karjaluo (2024)</a>
PR4	I believe the price of the social media premium subscription is reasonable, considering the advantages provided.	<a href="#">Mäntymäki et al. (2020)</a>
SI1	The people around me do not like freemium social media, so it makes me want to switch to a premium social media service.	<a href="#">Lin et al. (2020)</a>
SI2	The people around me who use social media premium make me interested in subscribing.	<a href="#">Zhou &amp; Li (2024)</a>
SI3	People around me recommended subscribing to social media premium, which made me interested in doing so.	
SI4	People around me have positive opinions about the social media premium, which encourages me to consider switching to it.	<a href="#">Ye et al. (2022)</a>
FM1	I feel that all the features in the social media premium should be free.	<a href="#">O'brien. (2022)</a>
FM2	I believe that providing comprehensive features is what social media freemiums should do.	
FM3	I believe that freemium social media platforms do not need to charge users for additional services.	<a href="#">Lin et al. (2013)</a>
FM4	I believe that social media freemium should offer the same benefits without requiring an upgrade to social media premium.	<a href="#">O'brien. (2022)</a>
SC1	I felt that the process of subscribing to social media premium was too complicated.	<a href="#">Cao et al. (2020)</a>
SC2	I feel like it takes a lot of time and effort to switch to a social media premium plan.	
SC3	When I switched to social media premium, I found it challenging to learn the features and differences.	<a href="#">Lin et al. (2020)</a>

Code	Measurement Items	References
SC4	I feel that the effort required to understand and adjust to the social media premium is quite high.	<a href="#">Ye et al. (2022)</a>
SW1	I feel like moving to a premium social media service right away.	<a href="#">Xu et al. (2021)</a>
SW2	I have given considerable thought to switching to social media premium.	<a href="#">Tyrväinen &amp; Karjaluoto (2024)</a>
SW3	I chose the social media premium to meet my needs.	<a href="#">Ye et al. (2022)</a>

**Appendix B. Interview Questions**

1. (H1) Do you find the freemium social media service unsatisfactory?
2. (H1) How did your dissatisfaction with using freemium social media affect your desire to switch to premium social media?
3. (H2) How does freemium social media limit the services you should get? Why do these restrictions affect your desire to switch to premium social media?
4. (H3) What is the condition of the frequency of ads appearing on freemium social media that makes you distracted and prompts you to switch to premium social media?
5. (H4) How does your belief in freemium social media’s ability to provide privacy protection affect your decision to stick with or switch to another service? Why is this important to you?
6. (H5) What do you think about the ability of premium social media to meet your needs and desires in social media? Why do you feel that premium social media is enough to meet these things that you chose to switch to premium social media?
7. (H6) What do you think about the additional features provided by premium social media? Why do you feel that this is enough to be an added value that you choose to switch?
8. (H7) How do you assess the benefits of subscribing to premium social media? Why does considering the price of premium services affect your desire to switch from freemium services?
9. (H8) How does the effort required to switch to premium social media affect your desire to switch from freemium social media?
10. (H9) How do recommendations by those around you (family, friends, and close relatives) affect your desire to switch to premium social media?
11. (H10) How do you feel about paying for social media? Why would you pay to enjoy social media?

**Appendix C. Cross-loading**

	DS	SHE	PV	PR	PC	RA	SW	FM	FN	THE	SC
<b>DS1</b>	0.798	0.413	0.386	0.423	0.512	0.377	0.473	0.262	0.336	0.477	0.345
<b>DS2</b>	0.834	0.371	0.342	0.421	0.504	0.346	0.404	0.220	0.278	0.491	0.383
<b>DS3</b>	0.849	0.371	0.367	0.418	0.487	0.345	0.417	0.254	0.297	0.461	0.397
<b>DS4</b>	0.856	0.418	0.382	0.420	0.515	0.327	0.432	0.209	0.297	0.462	0.433
<b>FM1</b>	0.274	0.349	0.336	0.297	0.259	0.251	0.331	0.809	0.356	0.403	0.362
<b>FM2</b>	0.253	0.311	0.305	0.299	0.256	0.260	0.340	0.802	0.388	0.418	0.368
<b>FM3</b>	0.166	0.260	0.292	0.275	0.197	0.254	0.356	0.807	0.307	0.307	0.416
<b>FM4</b>	0.234	0.264	0.307	0.278	0.197	0.250	0.323	0.826	0.336	0.349	0.468

	DS	SHE	PV	PR	PC	RA	SW	FM	FN	THE	SC
FN1	0.405	0.472	0.525	0.469	0.467	0.465	0.526	0.446	0.904	0.509	0.336
FN2	0.289	0.478	0.529	0.413	0.382	0.492	0.451	0.344	0.898	0.435	0.155
FN3	0.287	0.449	0.510	0.420	0.406	0.463	0.456	0.362	0.911	0.434	0.212
FN4	0.316	0.432	0.482	0.392	0.392	0.489	0.464	0.375	0.888	0.432	0.247
IA1	0.343	0.837	0.521	0.402	0.455	0.436	0.450	0.340	0.417	0.416	0.129
IA2	0.398	0.846	0.515	0.424	0.513	0.479	0.451	0.272	0.436	0.444	0.131
IA3	0.372	0.833	0.547	0.442	0.534	0.506	0.421	0.306	0.443	0.426	0.145
IA4	0.480	0.871	0.522	0.497	0.513	0.454	0.500	0.317	0.429	0.473	0.257
PC1	0.557	0.542	0.406	0.456	0.845	0.424	0.455	0.242	0.379	0.409	0.272
PC2	0.488	0.480	0.374	0.390	0.834	0.370	0.398	0.259	0.400	0.337	0.270
PC3	0.477	0.486	0.333	0.366	0.839	0.358	0.444	0.223	0.370	0.335	0.306
PC4	0.524	0.499	0.386	0.416	0.864	0.403	0.456	0.226	0.407	0.364	0.273
PR1	0.441	0.450	0.430	0.883	0.420	0.485	0.491	0.311	0.391	0.556	0.230
PR2	0.422	0.451	0.471	0.863	0.435	0.515	0.488	0.286	0.438	0.553	0.248
PR3	0.363	0.399	0.359	0.744	0.339	0.421	0.359	0.287	0.343	0.419	0.201
PR4	0.456	0.449	0.511	0.852	0.411	0.512	0.503	0.305	0.403	0.574	0.253
PV1	0.441	0.558	0.896	0.511	0.406	0.560	0.489	0.336	0.511	0.522	0.226
PV2	0.395	0.545	0.884	0.479	0.410	0.553	0.488	0.305	0.493	0.502	0.149
PV3	0.368	0.567	0.902	0.448	0.391	0.540	0.451	0.390	0.520	0.504	0.195
PV4	0.382	0.551	0.899	0.471	0.380	0.530	0.459	0.339	0.512	0.505	0.187
RA1	0.350	0.478	0.511	0.480	0.376	0.832	0.427	0.264	0.433	0.466	0.115
RA2	0.333	0.456	0.507	0.492	0.389	0.838	0.422	0.236	0.450	0.407	0.093
RA3	0.312	0.464	0.505	0.469	0.383	0.828	0.436	0.241	0.456	0.433	0.098
RA4	0.403	0.457	0.523	0.502	0.396	0.857	0.521	0.302	0.440	0.472	0.169
SC1	0.387	0.169	0.181	0.241	0.252	0.098	0.321	0.432	0.225	0.265	0.893
SC2	0.389	0.168	0.169	0.250	0.287	0.106	0.322	0.479	0.241	0.286	0.895
SC3	0.464	0.186	0.183	0.245	0.326	0.159	0.365	0.448	0.226	0.329	0.902
SC4	0.432	0.191	0.224	0.270	0.324	0.151	0.365	0.434	0.273	0.331	0.911
SI1	0.549	0.367	0.406	0.520	0.313	0.405	0.415	0.283	0.382	0.796	0.342
SI2	0.442	0.432	0.442	0.515	0.345	0.408	0.495	0.446	0.421	0.817	0.286
SI3	0.473	0.432	0.504	0.511	0.363	0.440	0.494	0.451	0.457	0.858	0.295
SI4	0.426	0.484	0.521	0.551	0.392	0.503	0.477	0.307	0.406	0.836	0.203
SW1	0.490	0.493	0.461	0.505	0.504	0.486	0.882	0.352	0.487	0.546	0.339

	DS	SHE	PV	PR	PC	RA	SW	FM	FN	THE	SC
SW2	0.384	0.441	0.453	0.462	0.390	0.469	0.862	0.354	0.438	0.482	0.294
SW3	0.492	0.490	0.481	0.498	0.473	0.478	0.898	0.395	0.470	0.479	0.375

**Appendix D. Fornell-Lacker**

	DS	SHE	PV	PR	PC	RA	SW	FM	FN	THE	SC
DS	0.835										
SHE	0.473	0.847									
PV	0.444	0.620	0.895								
PR	0.505	0.523	0.534	0.837							
PC	0.606	0.594	0.443	0.482	0.845						
RA	0.419	0.552	0.610	0.580	0.460	0.839					
SW	0.520	0.540	0.528	0.555	0.519	0.542	0.881				
FM	0.284	0.365	0.382	0.354	0.280	0.313	0.417	0.811			
FN	0.364	0.509	0.569	0.472	0.460	0.530	0.529	0.427	0.900		
THE	0.567	0.520	0.568	0.633	0.428	0.531	0.571	0.454	0.505	0.827	
SC	0.466	0.199	0.211	0.280	0.332	0.144	0.383	0.497	0.268	0.338	0.900

**Appendix E. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Values**

	DS	SHE	PV	PR	PC	RA	SW	FM	FN	THE
SHE	0.544									
PV	0.498	0.696								
PR	0.586	0.604	0.596							
PC	0.701	0.685	0.496	0.556						
RA	0.484	0.641	0.685	0.672	0.532					
SW	0.601	0.623	0.595	0.641	0.599	0.627				
FM	0.338	0.431	0.440	0.423	0.332	0.368	0.495			
FN	0.404	0.569	0.618	0.528	0.512	0.596	0.592	0.486		
THE	0.671	0.603	0.642	0.738	0.497	0.620	0.667	0.538	0.568	
SC	0.524	0.218	0.228	0.313	0.369	0.156	0.428	0.571	0.286	0.383

**How to cite:**

Harahap, N. C., Alnazhary, L., Reksahamanoto, S. M. S., Djibat, Z. B., & Handayani, P. W. (2025). Users' Switching Intention from Social Media Freemium to Premium. *Jurnal Sistem Informasi (Journal of Information System)*, 21(2), 62–85.