

BEING UNIQUE MAKES US SIMILAR?

How Custom-made Product Examples from Close Others Lead to Dissimilar Choices

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ABSTRACT

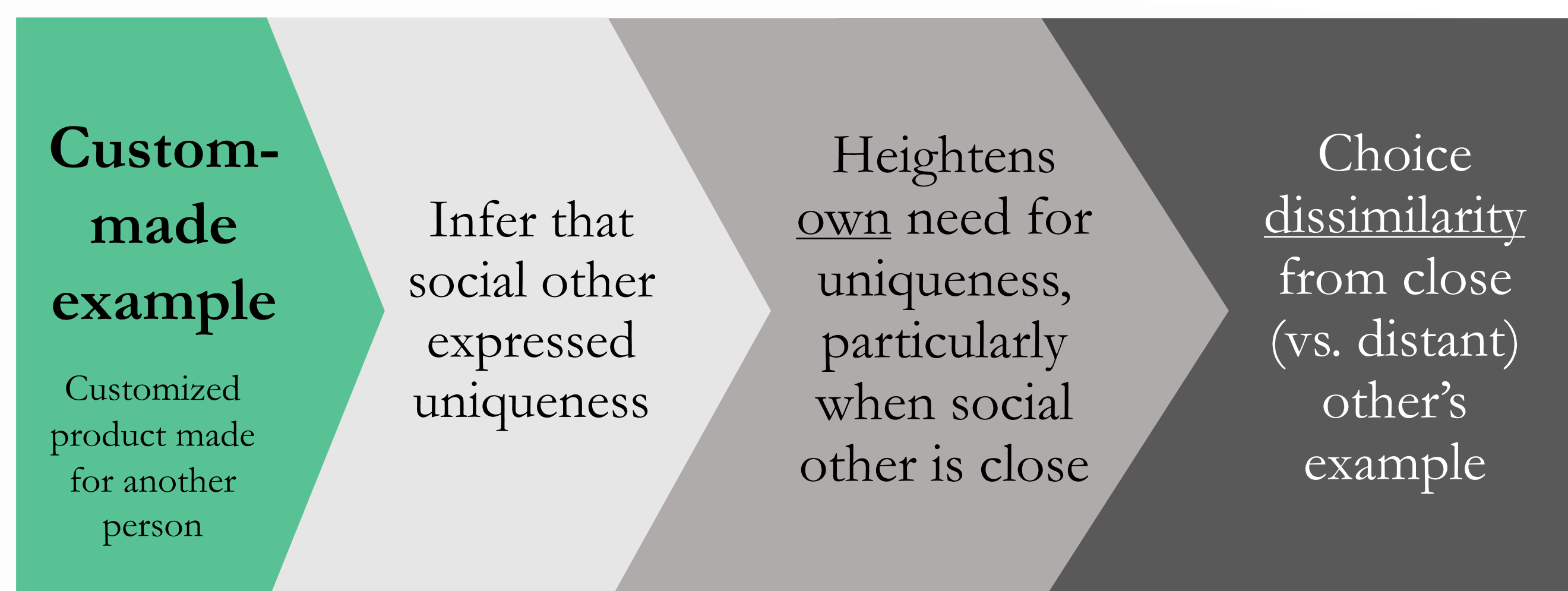
Consumers often exhibit choice similarity with close others. However, we find the opposite when customizing products. When consumers encounter close others' custom-made products, they perceive that others expressed uniqueness and that they, too, should express uniqueness. Hence, consumers make choices that are dissimilar rather than similar to close others' choices.

BACKGROUND

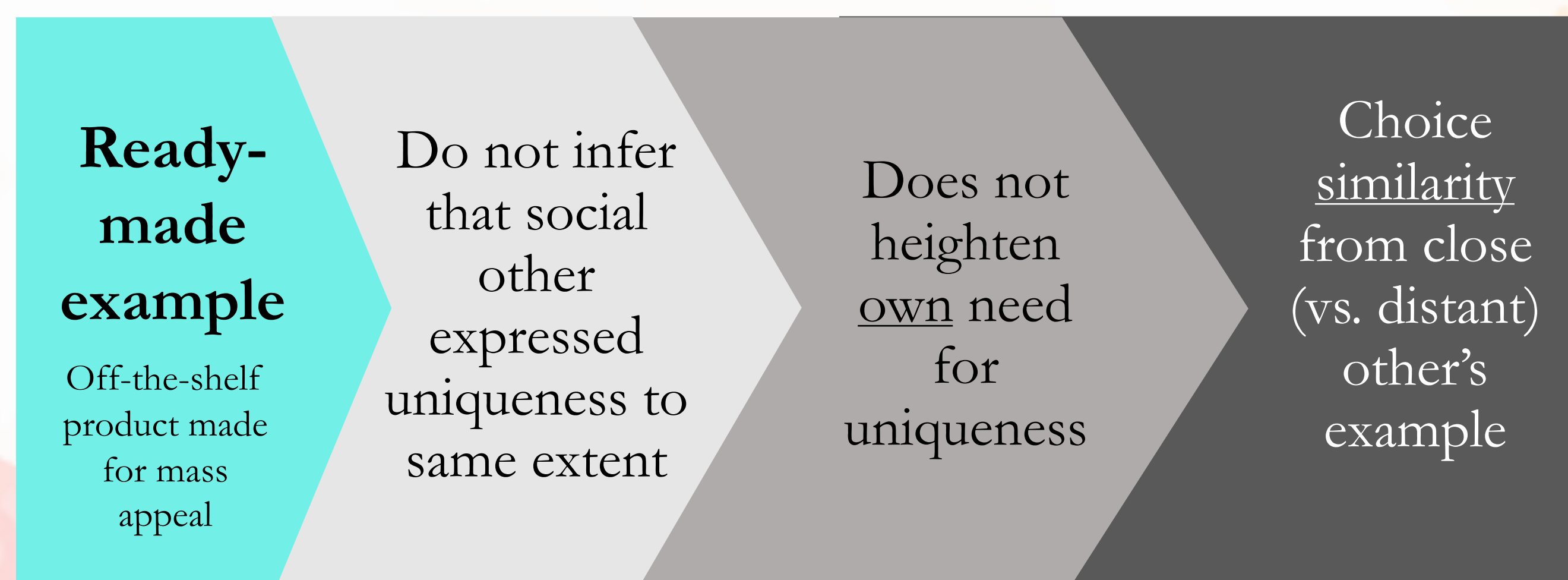
Providing examples of products created by *others* seems counterintuitive to the fundamental rationale of customization: tailoring products to consumers' *individual* preferences.

How do examples of other consumers' custom-made products influence our choices when customizing our own products?

- People infer motivations driving social others' actions [1] → activates same motivations in oneself, particularly when social others are psychologically close [2]
- Building on this logic, when individuals encounter custom-made examples, we suggest:



- However, when encountering ready-made examples:



References

- [1] Dik, G., & Aarts, H. (2008). I want to know what you want: How effort perception facilitates the motivation to infer another's goal. *Social Cognition*, 26(6), 737-754.
- [2] Wessler, J., & Hansen, J. (2017). Temporal Closeness Promotes Imitation of Meaningful Gestures in Face-to-Face Communication. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 1-17.

For additional information about this poster, contact Jennifer K. Lee at Lee90@usc.edu.

STUDY 1

N = 290 ($M_{age} = 27.7$) Between Subjects Design
2 social distance (close friend/distant acquaintance) x
2 example type (ready-made/custom-made)

METHOD

Social distance manipulation

Run into a social other who is...

Close

Distant

Example type manipulation

Social other is wearing a backpack that was...

Ready-made

Custom-made

Customize your own backpack

Select 8 of 24 patches shown

Need for Uniqueness Items ($\alpha = .88$)



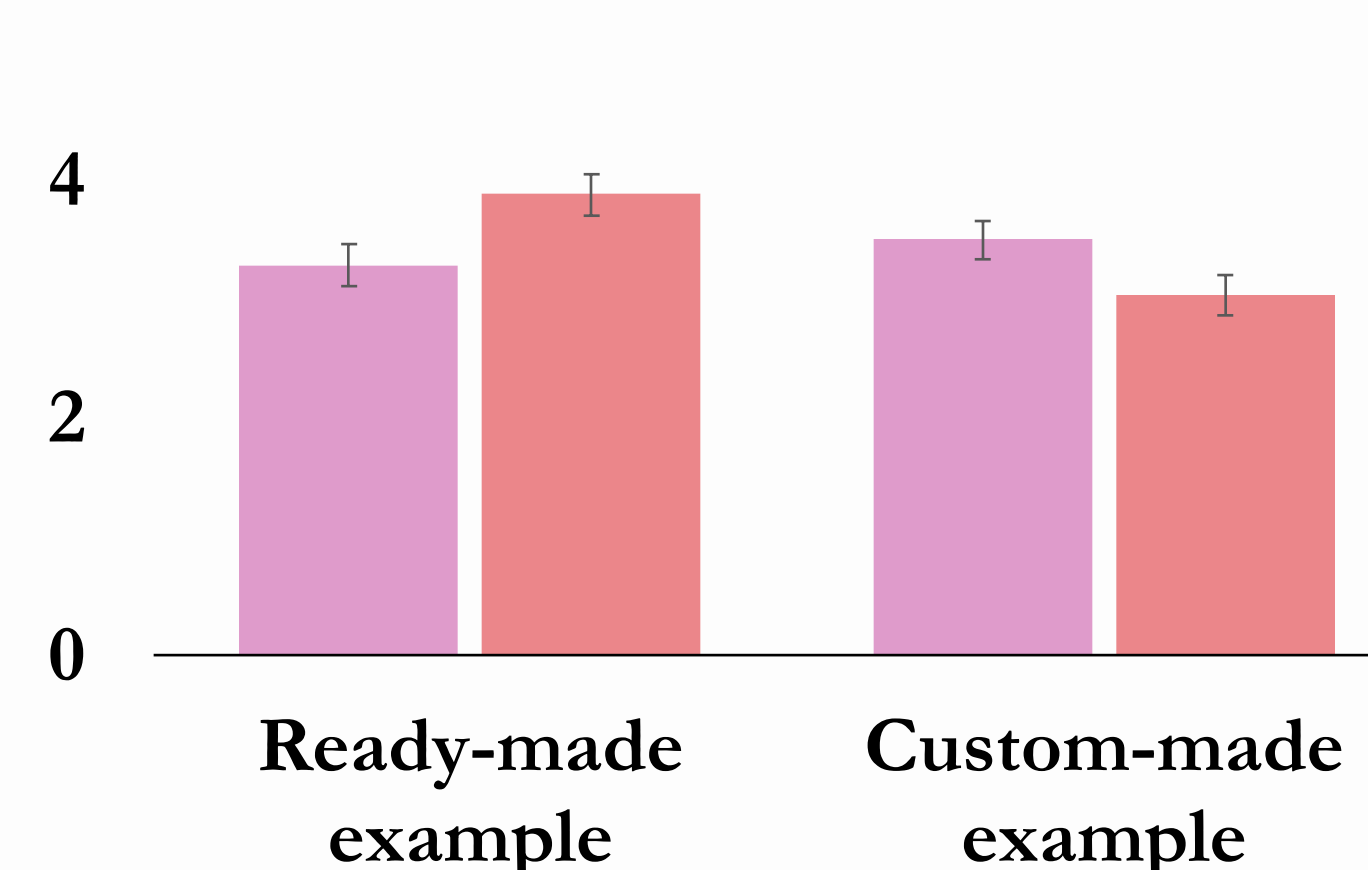
FINDINGS

Encountering a custom-(ready-) made example from a close other leads to decreased (increased) choice similarity relative to a distant other. We also find evidence for mediated moderation via need for uniqueness.

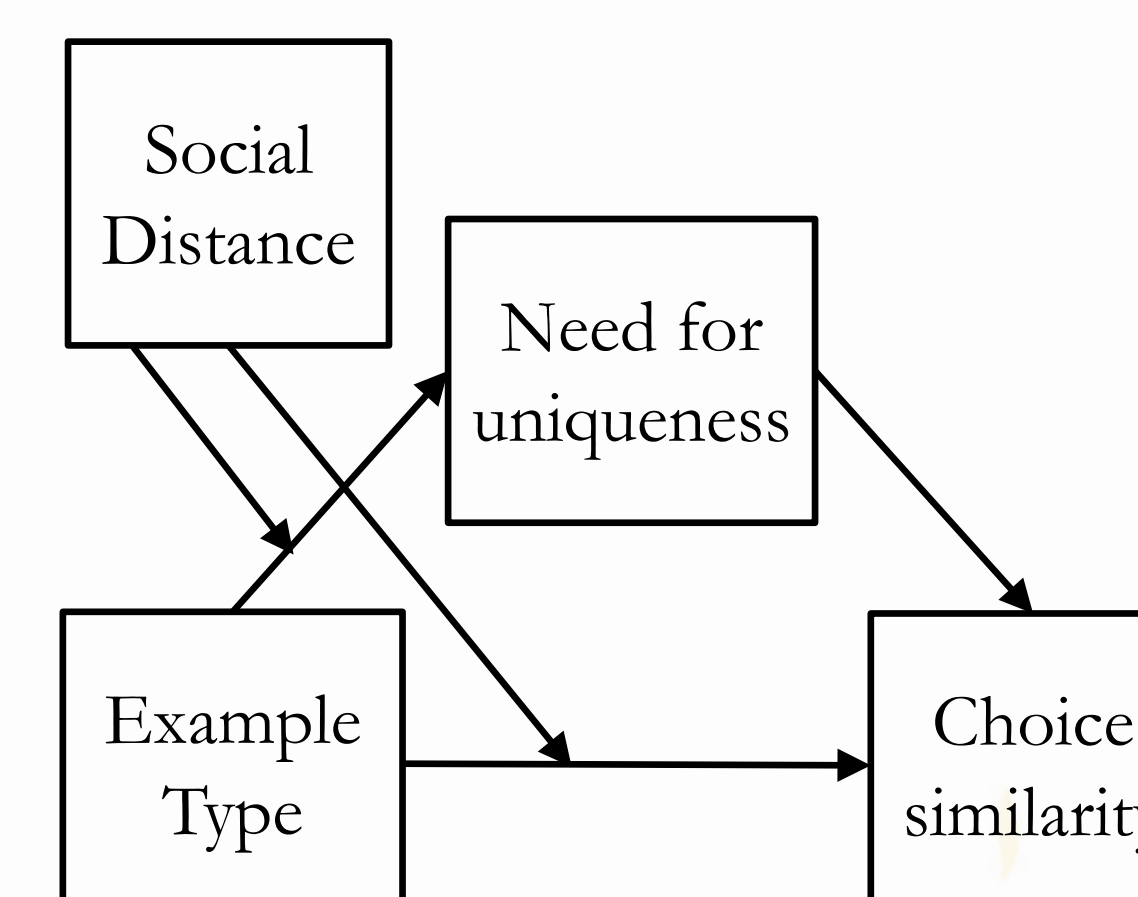
CHOICE SIMILARITY

patches chosen that were shown on example backpack

Legend: Distant (pink), Close (red)



Interaction: $F(1, 286) = 9.53, p < .003$



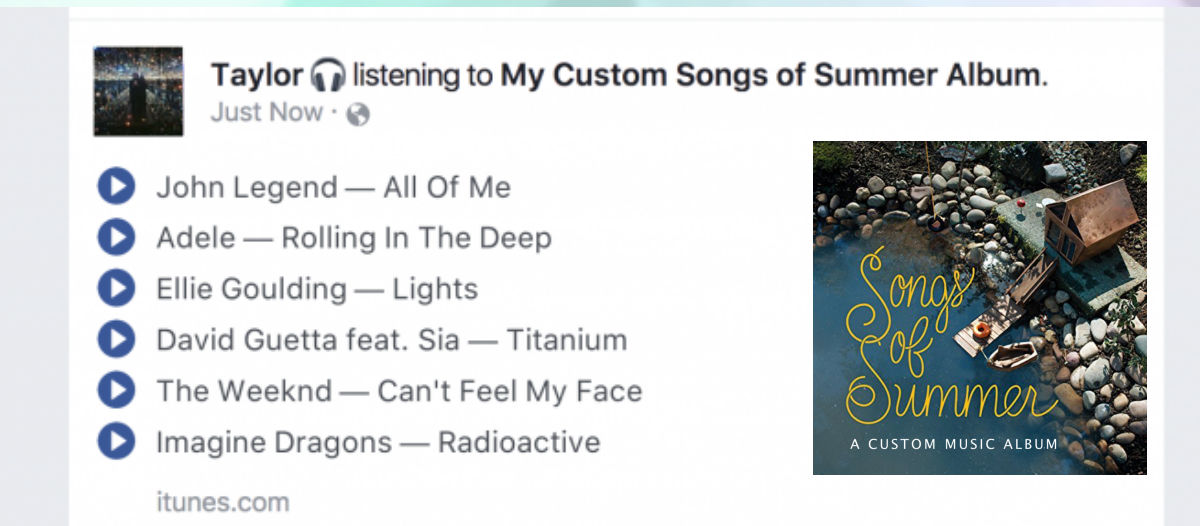
Custom-made Ready-made
[CI_{95%}: -.321, -.051]
[CI_{95%}: .025, .374]

STUDY 2

N = 400 ($M_{age} = 28.2$) Between Subjects Design
2 social distance (close friend/distant acquaintance) x
2 example type (ready-made/custom-made)

Participants customized a song album after seeing a social other's example

Song prices:
Songs on social other's album: 99¢
All other songs: \$1.29

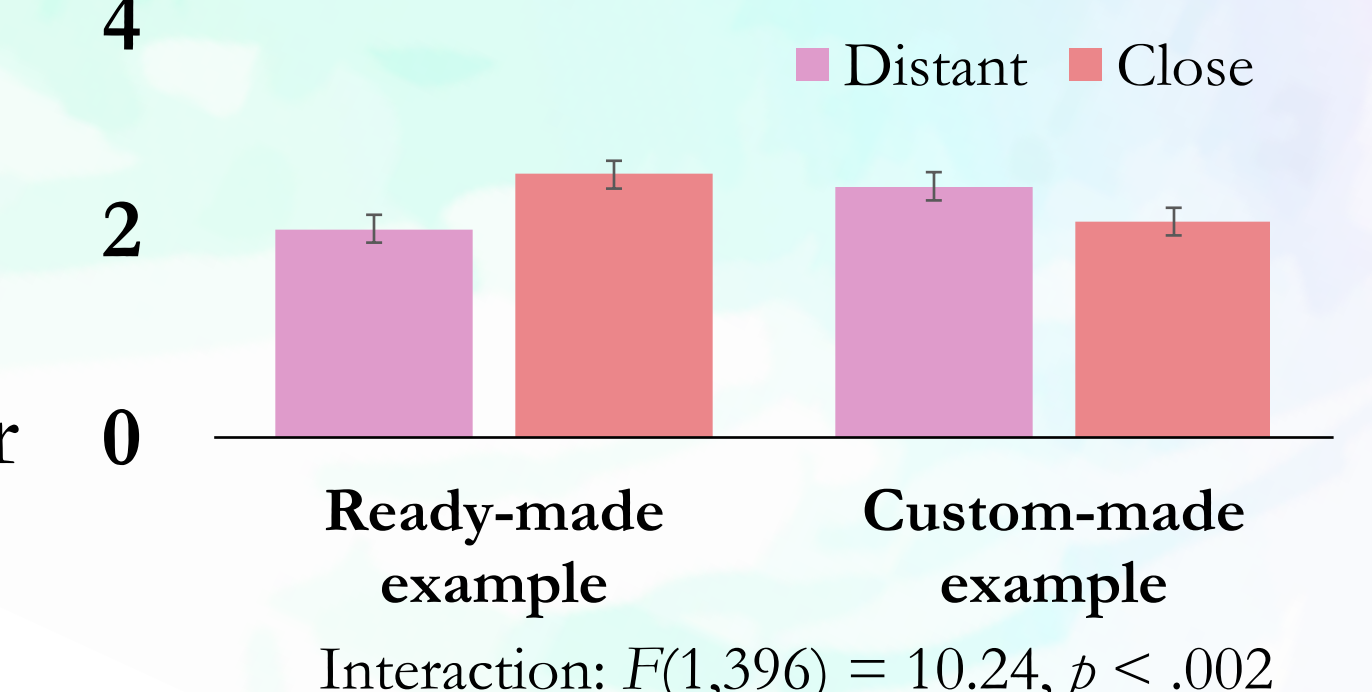


FINDINGS

- Conceptually replicate Study 1's findings in music context
- Find that individuals are willing to choose more expensive songs to make their song album unique

CHOICE SIMILARITY

songs chosen that were shown on example album



Interaction: $F(1, 396) = 10.24, p < .002$

STUDY 3

N = 300 ($M_{age} = 27.4$) Between Subjects Design
2 social distance (close friend/distant acquaintance) x
2 self-construal (independent/interdependent)

Participants in all conditions saw a custom-made backpack example

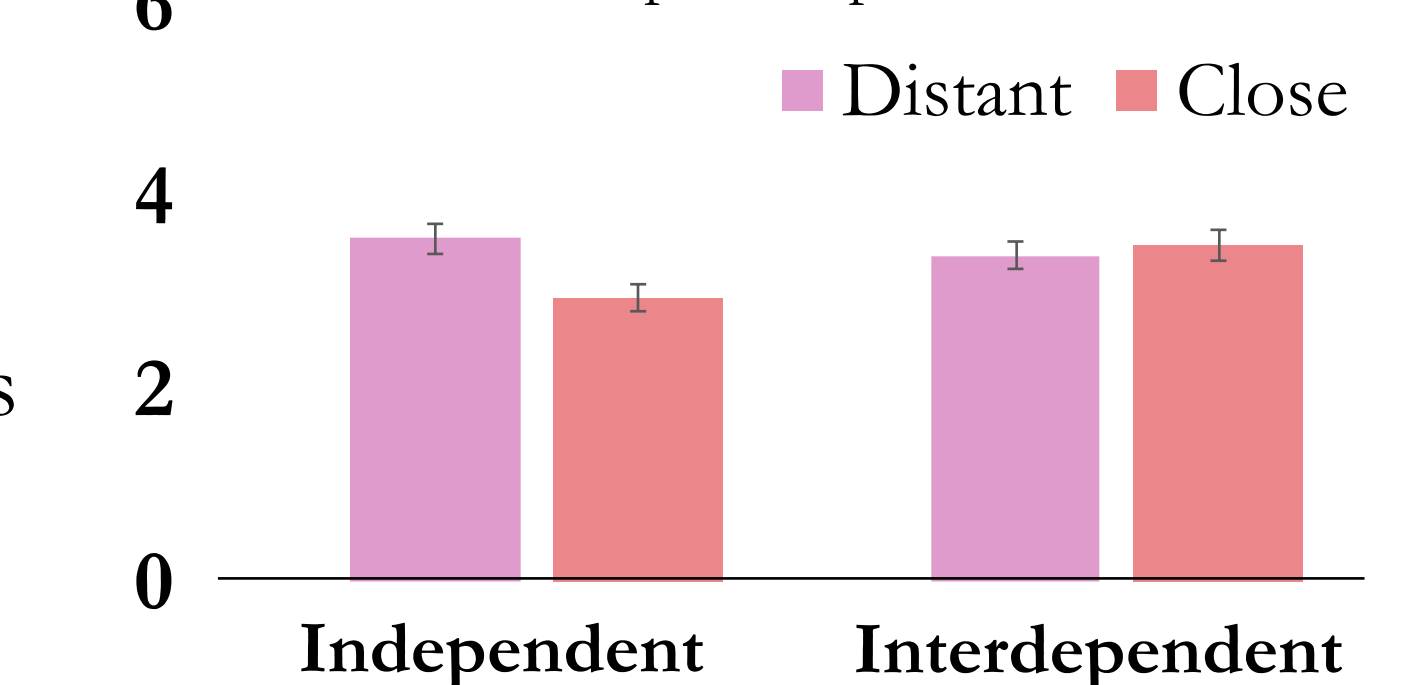
FINDINGS

Finding of choice dissimilarity from a close other's custom-made example:

- Replicates for independents
- Attenuates for interdependents (i.e., those not motivated to be unique from social others)

CHOICE SIMILARITY

patches chosen that were shown on example backpack



Interaction: $F(1, 296) = 5.82, p < .02$

DISCUSSION

We examine how social others enter the customization process. This research demonstrates that custom-made product examples influence individuals to choose fewer of the same choices made by a close (vs. distant) other due to a heightened need for uniqueness.

