



Skyler Chen, Ellen R. K. Evers
 Haas School of Business
 University of California, Berkeley
 Contact: skylerymchen@berkeley.edu

Exploring Souvenir Purchasing Decisions

Abstract

We predict that people often buy souvenirs as memory-cues for meaningful experiences. Using a combination of prototype analysis and experimental studies, we explore the unique consumer values attached to souvenirs. Our findings reveal a stronger preference for souvenirs linked to travel experiences. Additionally, we found that if one particular experience out of a series is special, people prefer a specific reminder of that experience; otherwise, they favor a more generic souvenir.

Prototype Analysis

Study 1 (N = 200): Identified key features of souvenirs through open-ended responses and coding.

Study 2 (N = 200): Participants rated how central each feature is to the concept of a souvenir.

Results

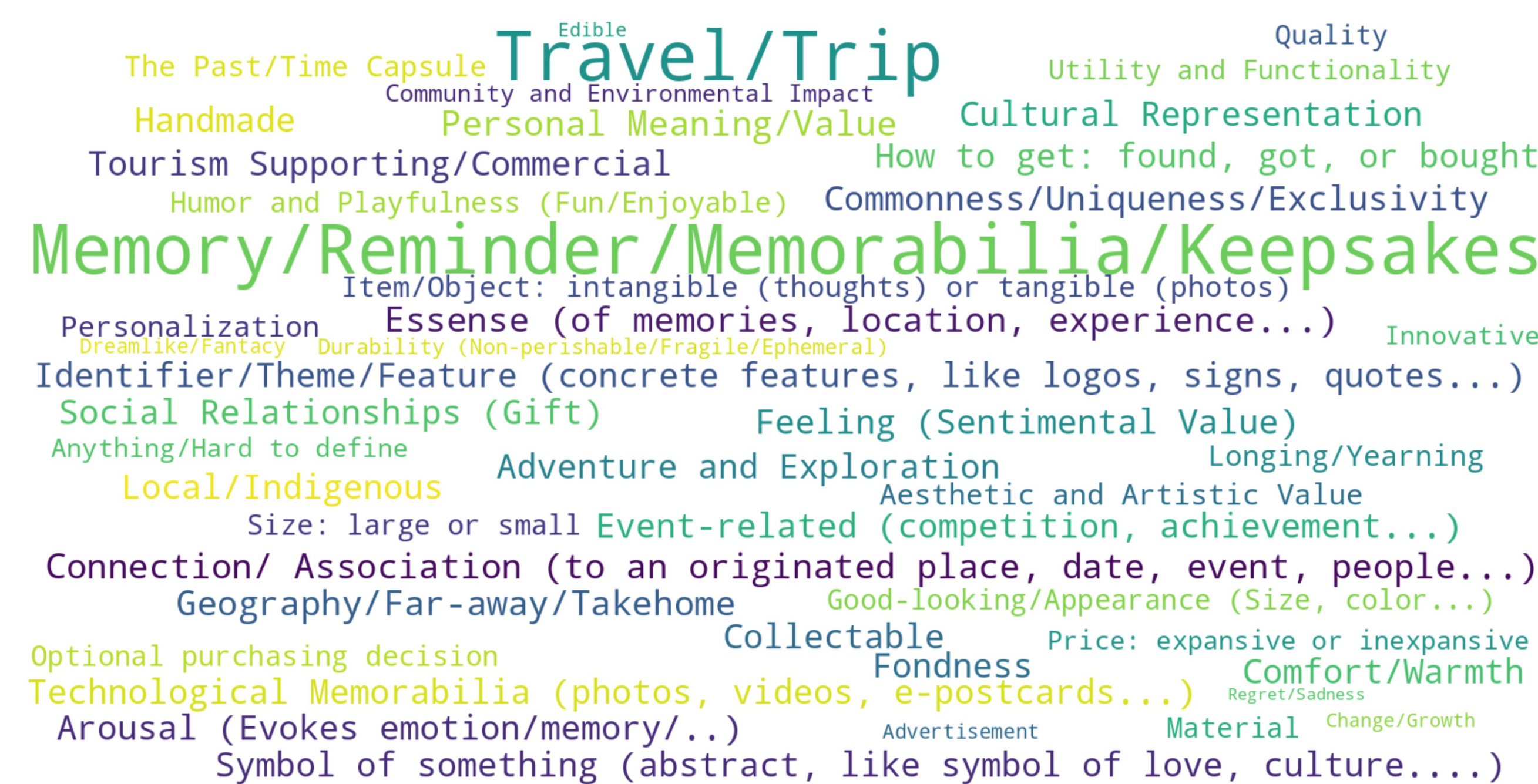
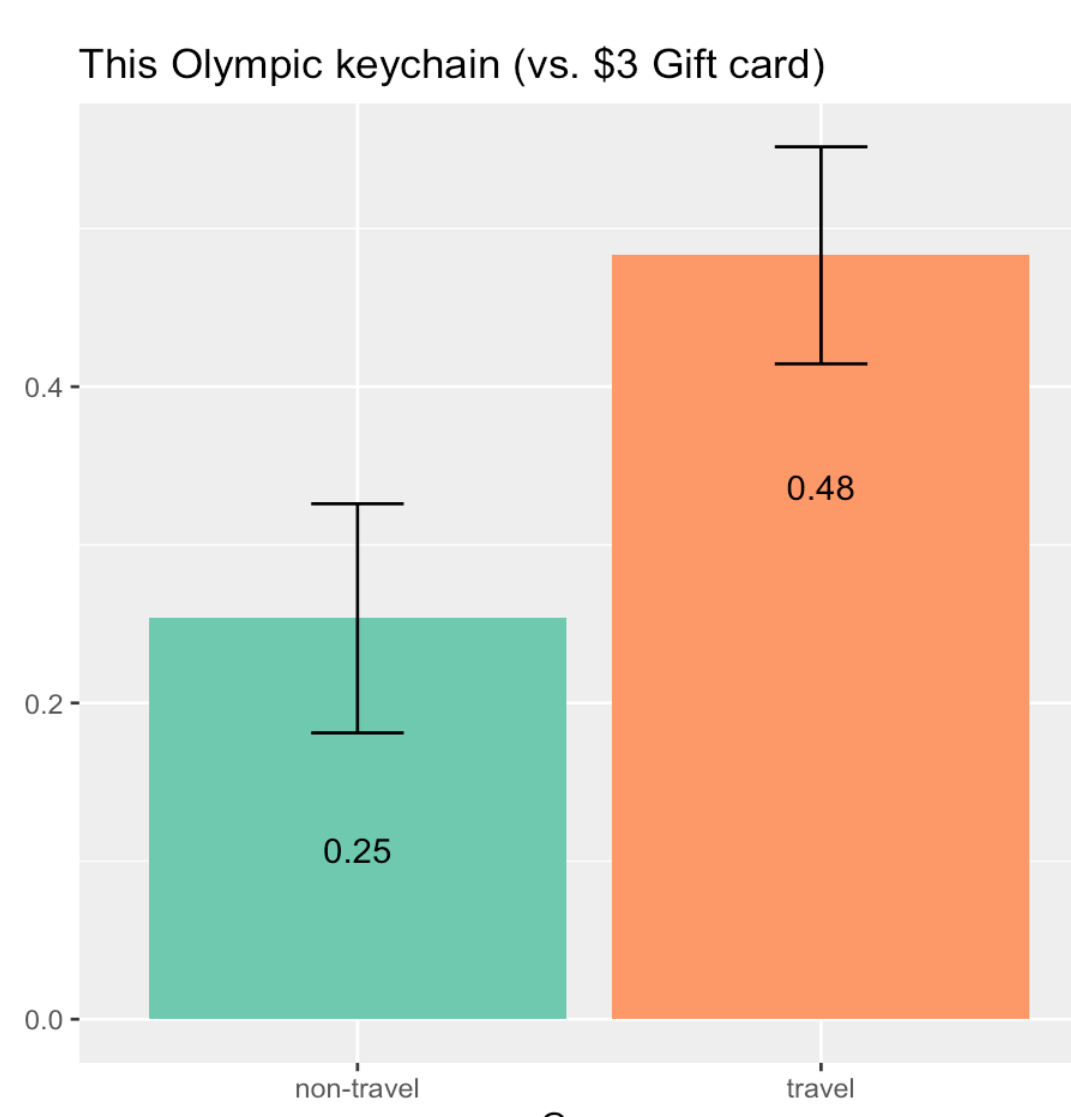
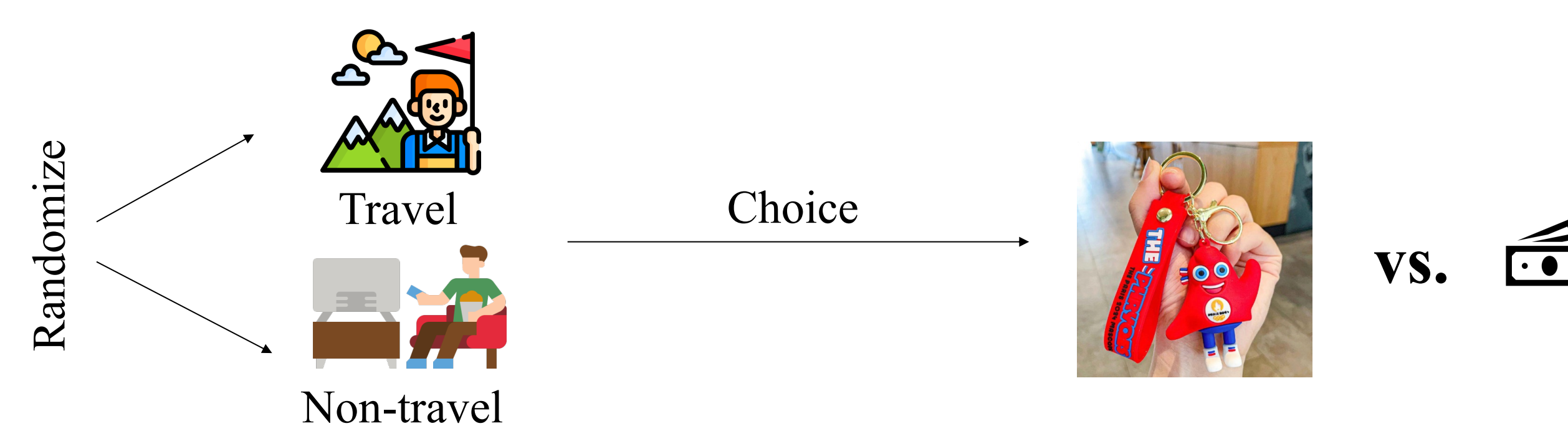


Figure 1. Prototype Analysis Result (Study 1 & Study 2)

45 unique categories identified. The most central feature was memory, which was rated to be the most central feature of souvenirs, followed closely by trip/travel.

Experiment 1 (N = 400)

Tested the effect of a travel experience (attending the Olympics in Paris vs. watching on TV) on choice between a 2024 Olympics keychain and a \$3 gift card.

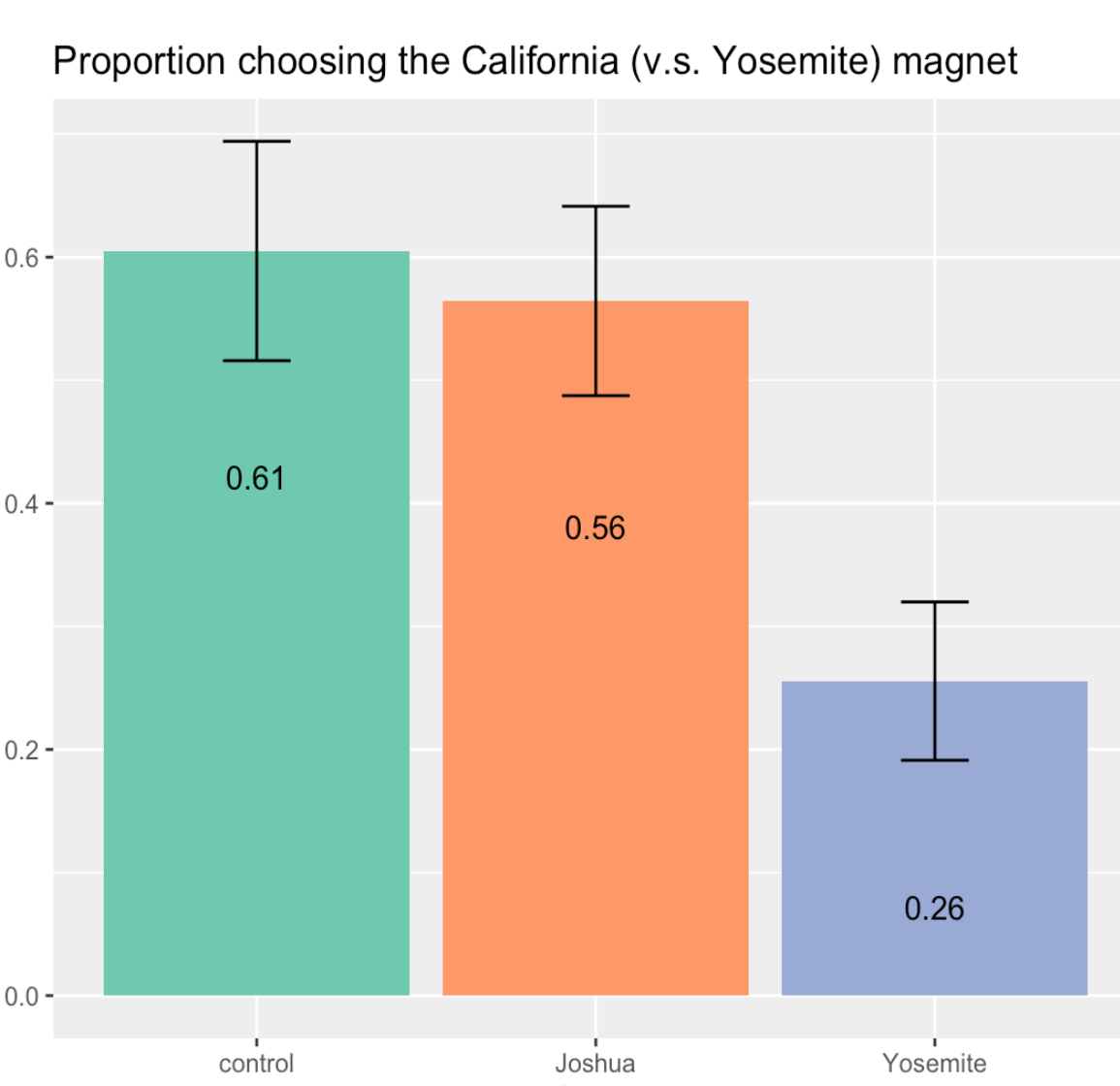
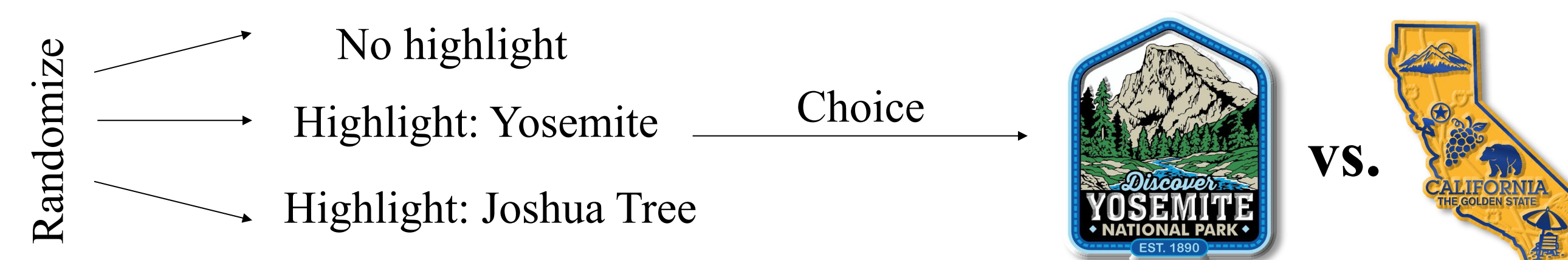


Results

Participants show a greater preference for the Olympic keychain when the experience involves traveling, compared to when it does not.

Experiment 2 (N = 600)

Examined preference for a specific magnet (Yosemite) vs. a generic one (California) based on whether the trip featured a highlight (Yosemite or Joshua Tree) or not.

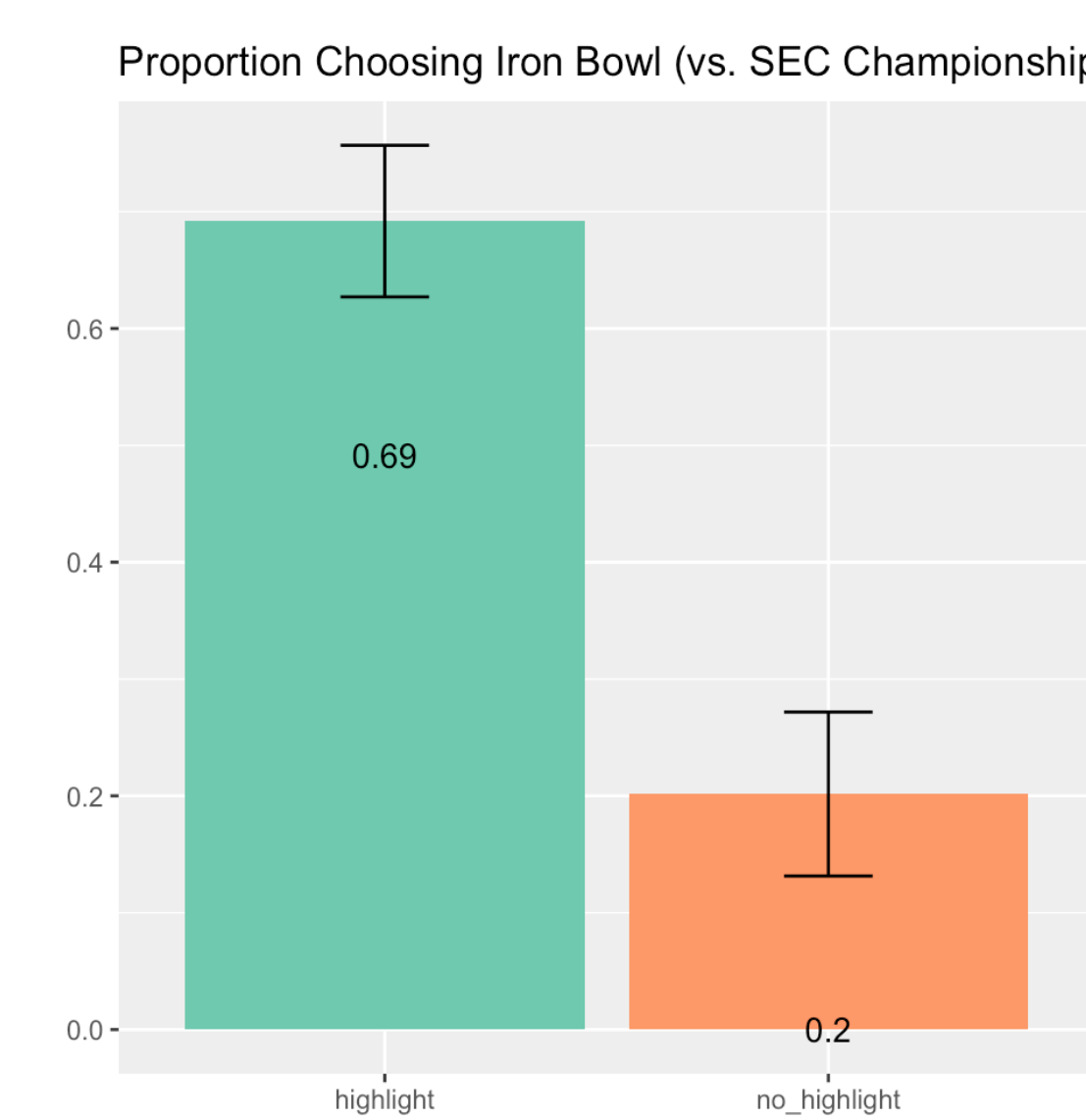
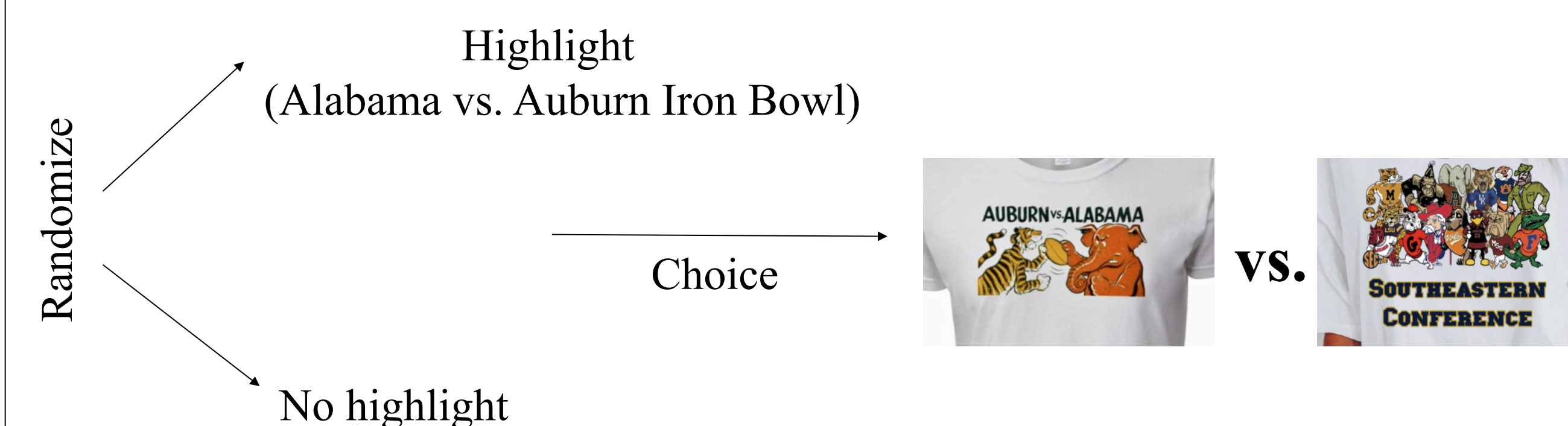


Results

People prefer the Yosemite magnet over the generic California magnet if Yosemite is the highlight of the trip; otherwise, they prefer the California magnet if no highlight is specified.

Experiment 3 (N = 400)

Tested the effect of a highlight event (Alabama vs. Auburn Iron Bowl) on choice between a specific reminder (Iron Bowl t-shirt) and a generic one (SEC championship t-shirt).



Results

When the Alabama football game stands out as the highlight, people prefer the Iron Bowl t-shirt. However, if no particular event stands out, participants are more likely to choose the general SEC Championship t-shirt.

Conclusion

We identified key features of souvenirs through prototype analysis. Experiments revealed that participants showed a stronger preference for souvenirs associated with travel experiences compared to non-travel contexts. Additionally, when a specific event stands out as a highlight, participants prefer a specific souvenir related to the highlight over a generic one. An ongoing lab experiment is investigating whether specific souvenirs are more effective at sustaining memories over time compared to generic ones.

References

Hepper, E. G., Ritchie, T. D., Sedikides, C., & Wildschut, T. (2012). Odyssey's end: lay conceptions of nostalgia reflect its original Homeric meaning. *Emotion, 12*(1), 102.

Seuntjens, T. G., Zeelenberg, M., Breugelmans, S. M., & Van de Ven, N. (2015). Defining greed. *British Journal of Psychology, 106*(3), 505-525.

Zauberman, G., Ratner, R. K., & Kim, B. K. (2009). Memories as assets: Strategic memory protection in choice over time. *Journal of Consumer Research, 35*(5), 715-728.