

It Takes Much More to Understand Me Than to Understand You: An Asymmetry in the Perceived Informativeness of Self vs. Others' Preference Expression

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Abstract

- In four preregistered studies (N=2,219), we found that people often perceive others' preference responses as more informative than their own.
- This inference asymmetry leads people to believe that less information is needed to accurately predict others' preferences than their own.
- People find others' subordinate (detailed) expressions of preferences (e.g., Fusion Jazz) more informative than superordinate (general) ones (e.g., Jazz), but see no added value in their own subordinate expressions.

Introduction

- Accurately predicting others' thoughts and behaviors is challenging, as people often apply different standards to others than to themselves (e.g., Ross, 1977).
- People tend to overestimate others' preferences, believing that others like and value goods more than they do themselves (Frederick, 2012; Jung et al., 2020).
- Our research explores a novel dimension of inferring self-other preferences: perceived informativeness.

Methods

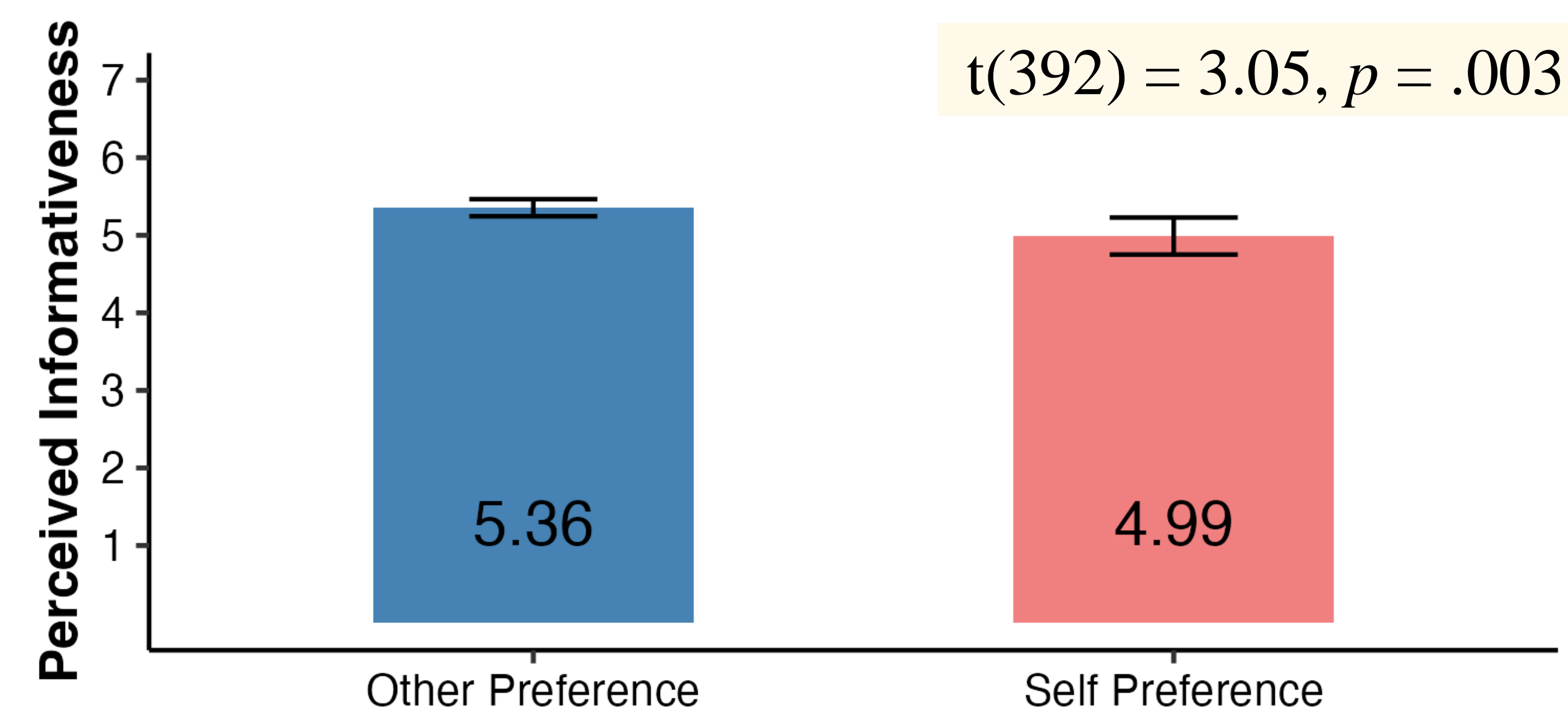
Study 1&2: Participants in the Self condition reported their preferences and rated how informative this would be to others, while those in the Other condition rated the informativeness of a randomly drawn preference response from someone else.

Study 3a&b: In the Self condition, participants indicated the min. pieces of information others would need to accurately predict their preferences, while in the Other condition, they reported the min. needed to accurately predict others' preferences.

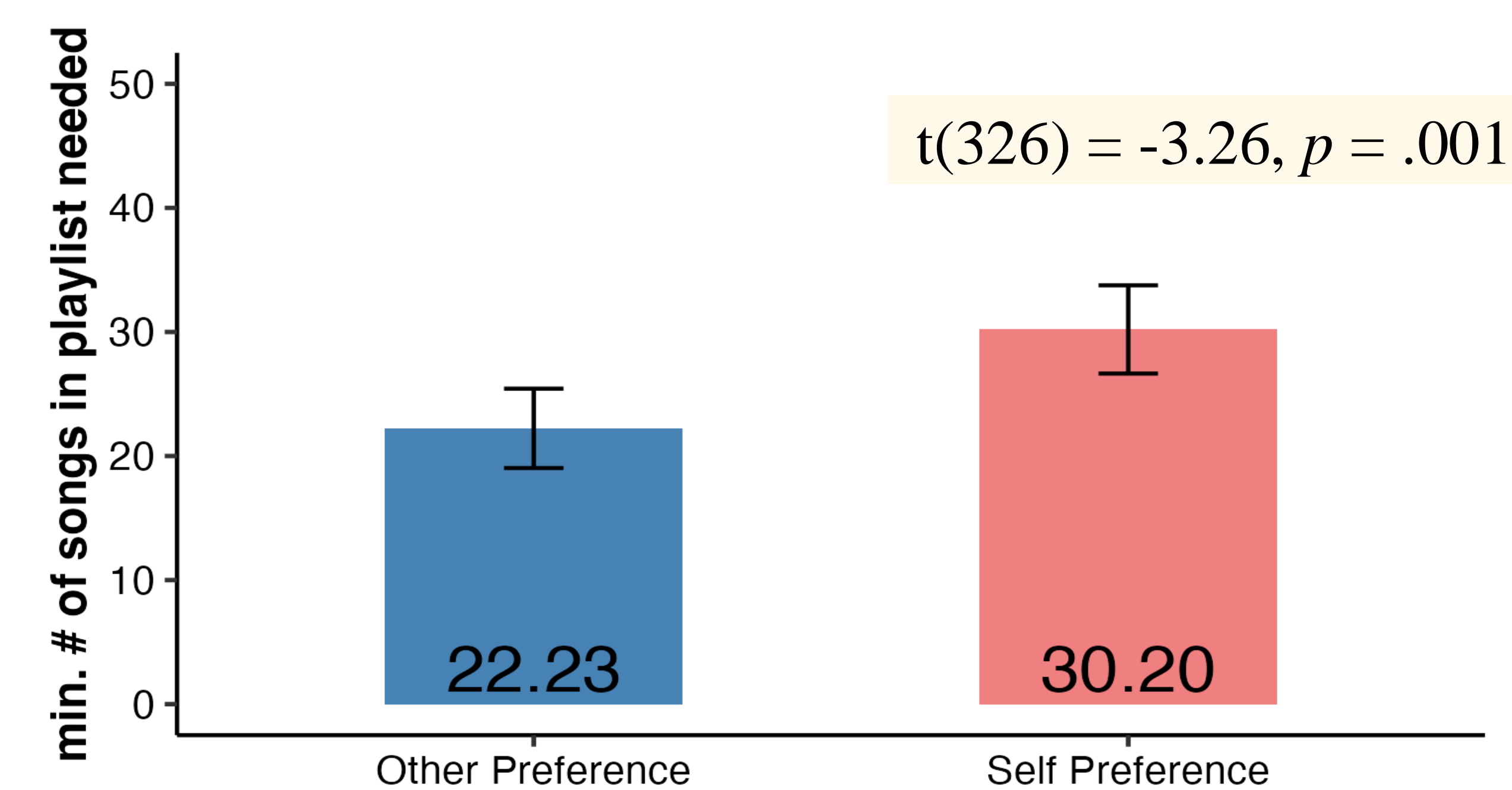
Study 4: The self-other manipulation was consistent with Study 1&2. Participants in the Subordinate Category condition saw a choice of a specific music subgenre, alongside a general genre choice from the Superordinate Category condition.

Results

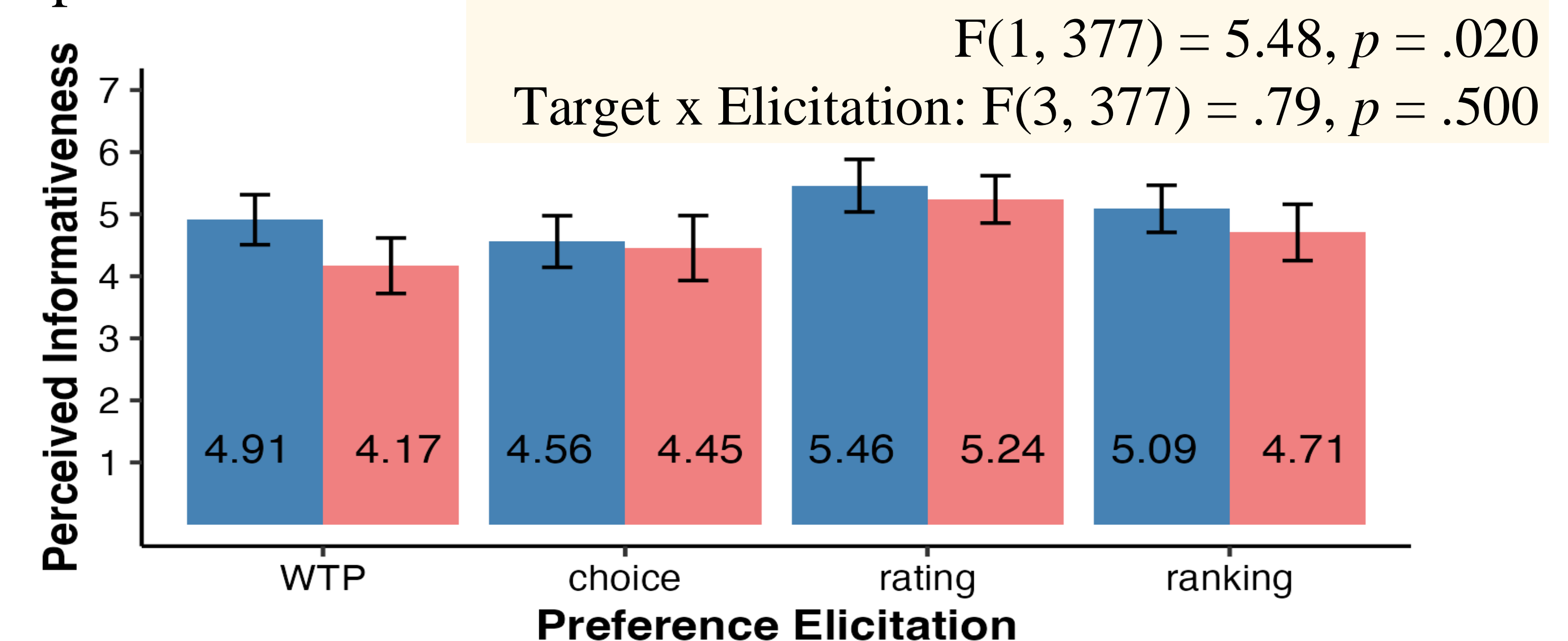
Study 1: How do people perceive the informativeness of their own vs. others' preference responses? (ranking)



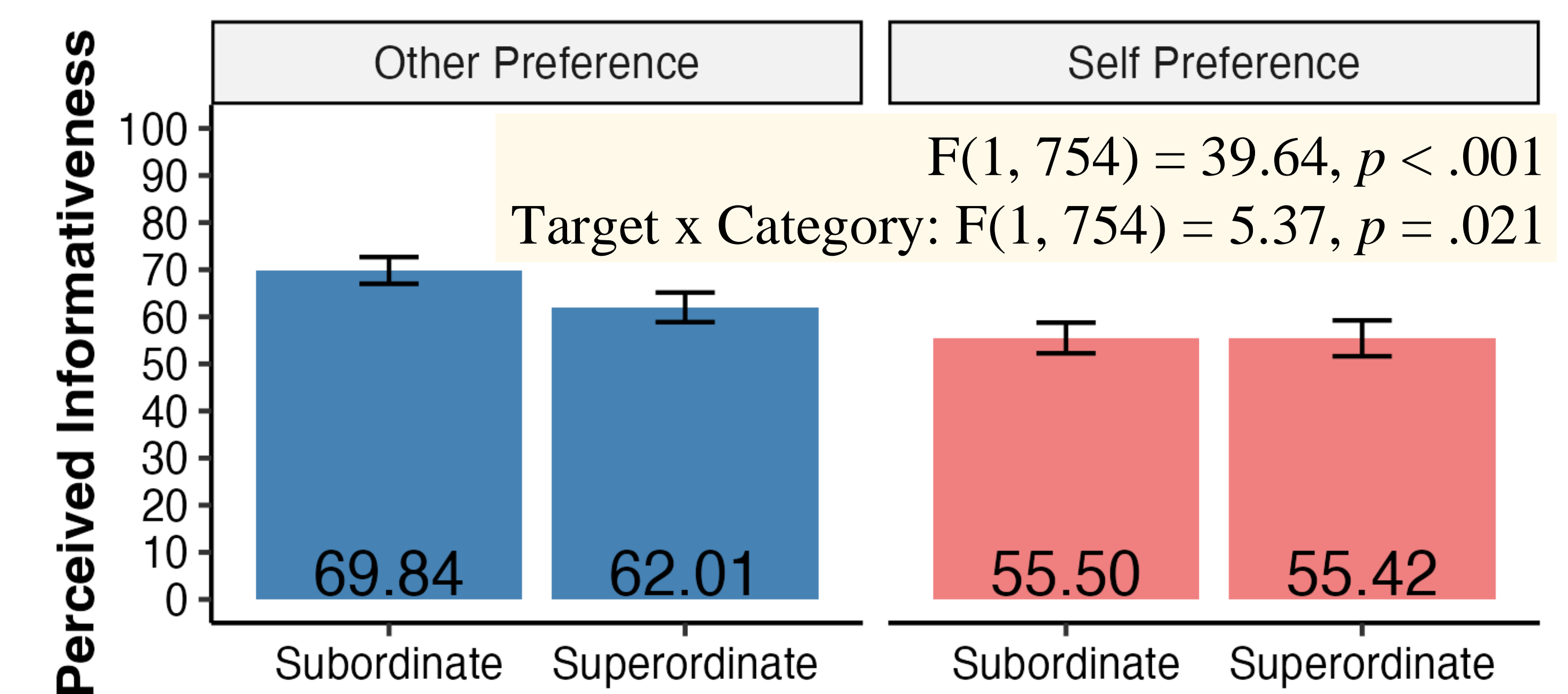
Study 3a: How much information is needed to predict one's own vs. others' preferences?



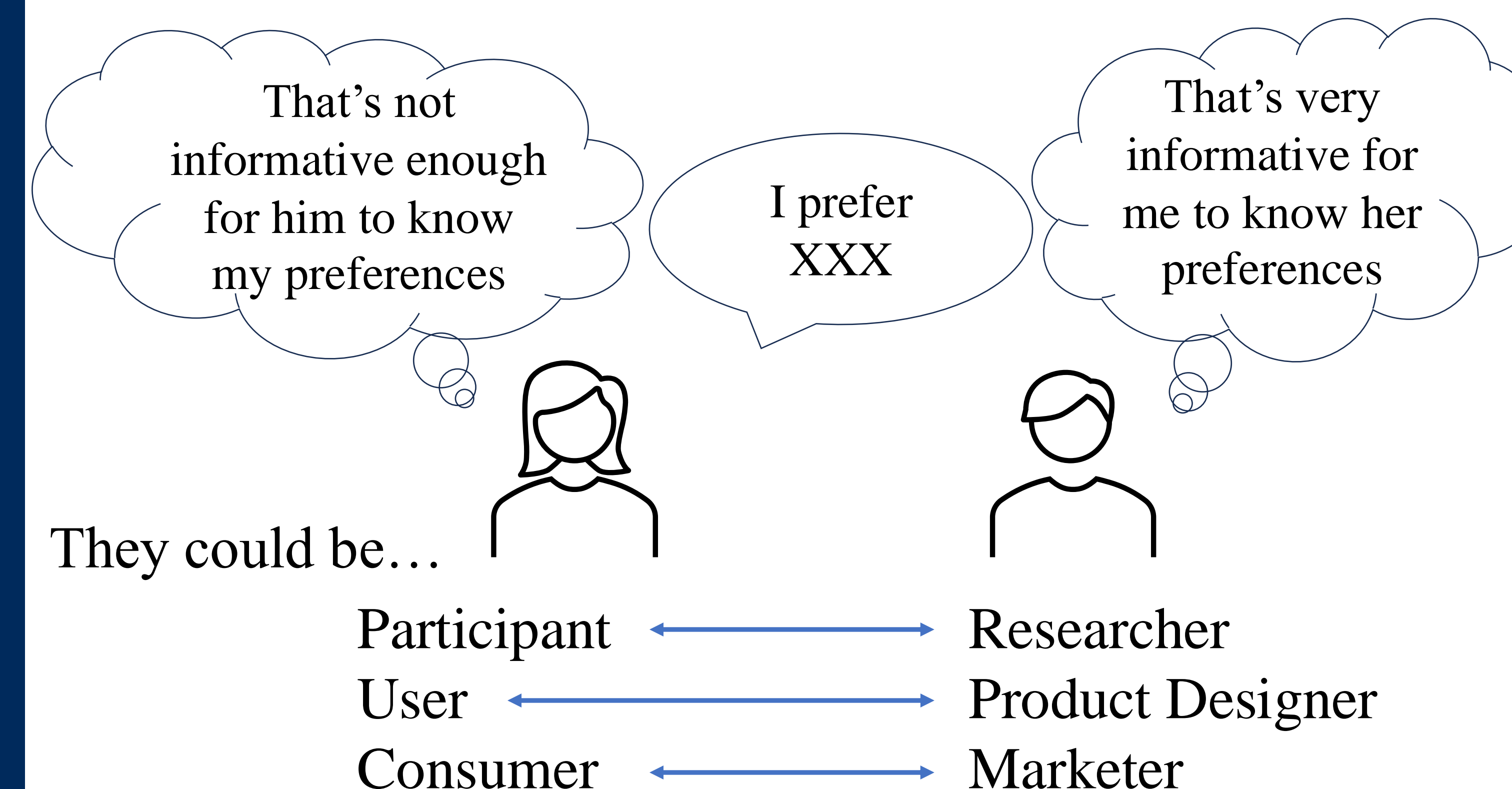
Study 2: Does the asymmetry depend on the method of preference elicitation?



Study 4: Does the asymmetry persist when evaluating additional details about self vs. others' preferences?



Discussion



Implications

- This self-other asymmetry may lead to biases, such as overconfidence, that impact social judgment and decision-making.
- Our findings have profound implications for fields like marketing, where accurate preference interpretation is crucial.
- Recognizing this informativeness bias can guide better tools for preference elicitation, enhancing predictive accuracy and communication.