

I'd Like Anything But Anchovies: Rejecting Unpopular Options Reduces Decision Difficulty in Joint Consumption

Qingyang (Roy) Wang, Grant E. Donnelly

Summary

- Rejecting an option, particularly an unappealing one, reduces decision difficulty in joint consumption.
- This occurs because decision-makers infer greater similarity with their co-consumers.
- Effects are mitigated when the rejection is not because of personal preference or the option's appeal is not salient and in more established relationships.

Introduction

- Revealing a preference often eases decision-making compared to expressing no preference in joint consumption. (Kim et al., 2023)
- Requestors prefer responders expressing a preference to ease the decision; Responders mask preferences to convey likability. (Liu & Min, 2020)
- Rejecting an unpopular item may be a way for responders to express a preference while still conveying likability by appearing easygoing. (Lamberton et al., 2013; Perfecto et al., 2017; Nan, Park & Yang, 2023)

What would you like to have for dinner?



Let's eat Pizza!

I'd like anything but Anchovies!

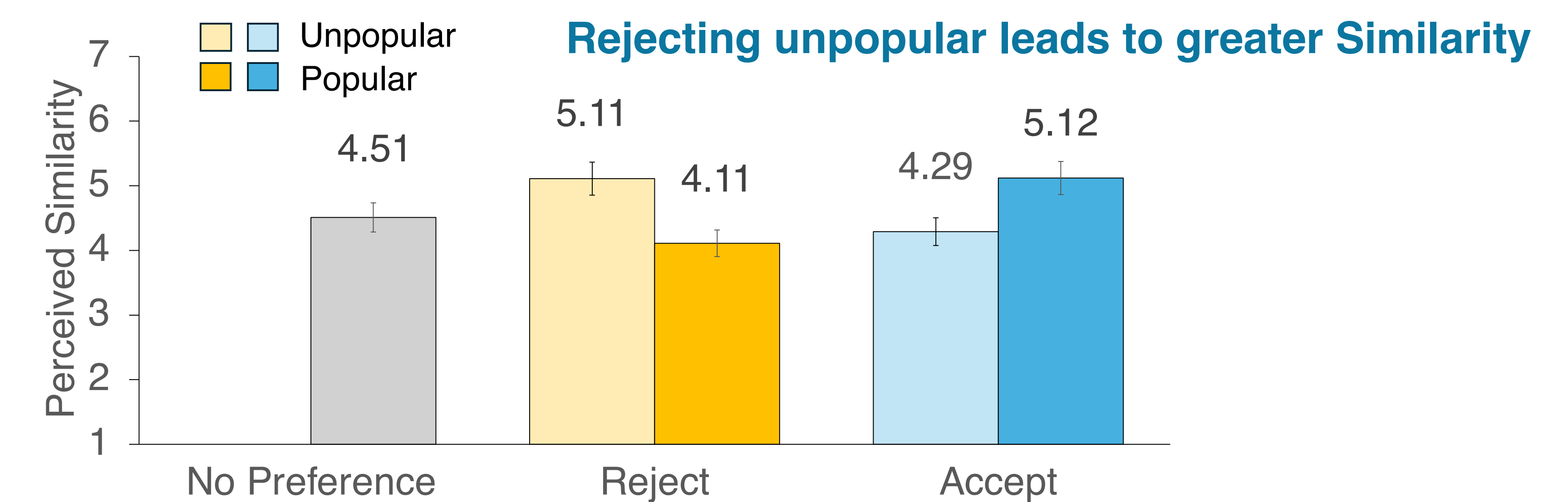
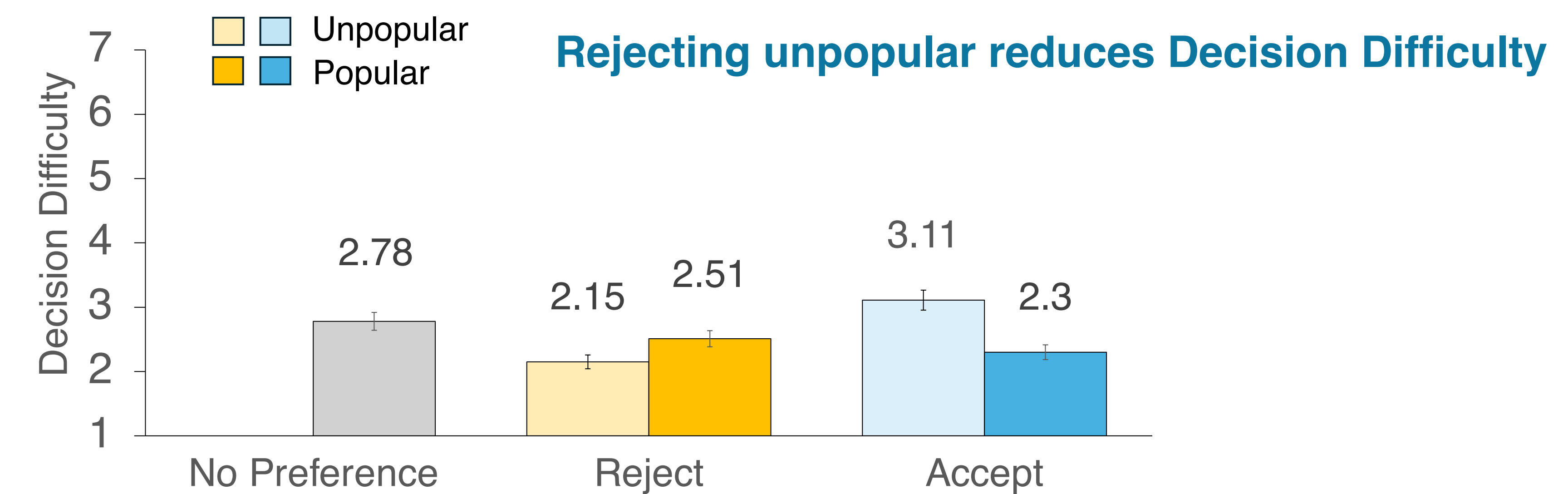
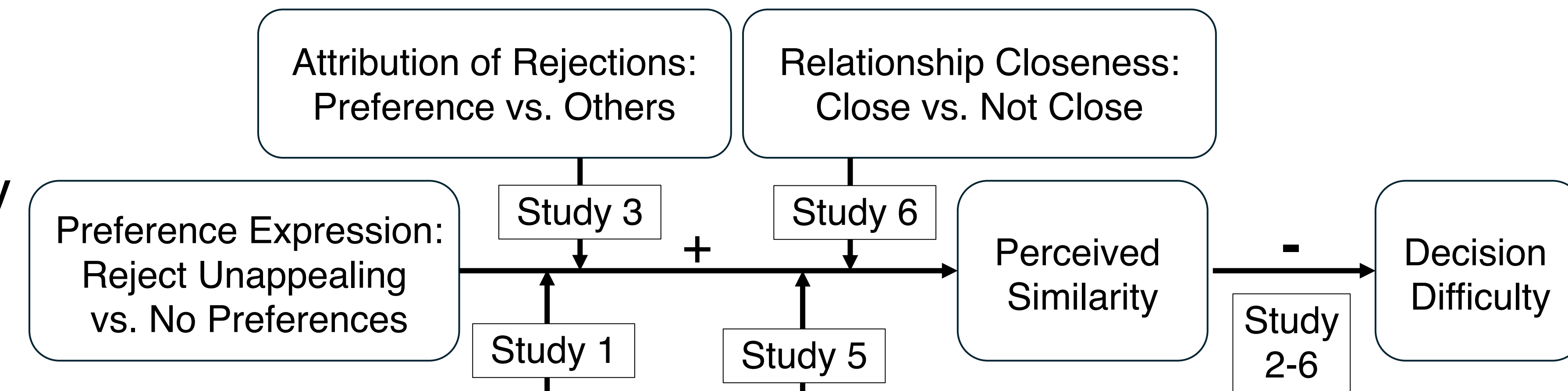
Methods & Results

Six pre-registered studies (N = 3,601)

- IV:** Preference communication
- DV:** Decision difficulty; Perceived Similarity
- Contexts: A variety of joint consumption domains, including food, music, and trivia

Stimuli: Participants were in a joint consumption scenario, asking about their co-consumers' preferences:

(No Preference) I have no preference, but it's your call!
(Reject Unpopular) I like anything but Country music, but it's your call!
(Reject Popular) I like anything but Rock music, but it's your call!
(Accept Unpopular) I like Country music best, but it's your call!
(Accept Popular) I like Rock music best, but it's your call!



Discussion

Theoretical Contribution:

Rejecting unpopular can simplify joint decision-making and enhance mutual well-being. Particularly when the rejection is personal, option labels inform the choice, and in more established relationships.

Practical Implication:

This insight benefits service providers and dyadic consumers by highlighting the importance of negative preferences in joint consumption.

References:

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