

# Do Our Choices Tell Us Who We Are? It Depends on How Easy They Were to Make

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## Opportunity

### Abstract

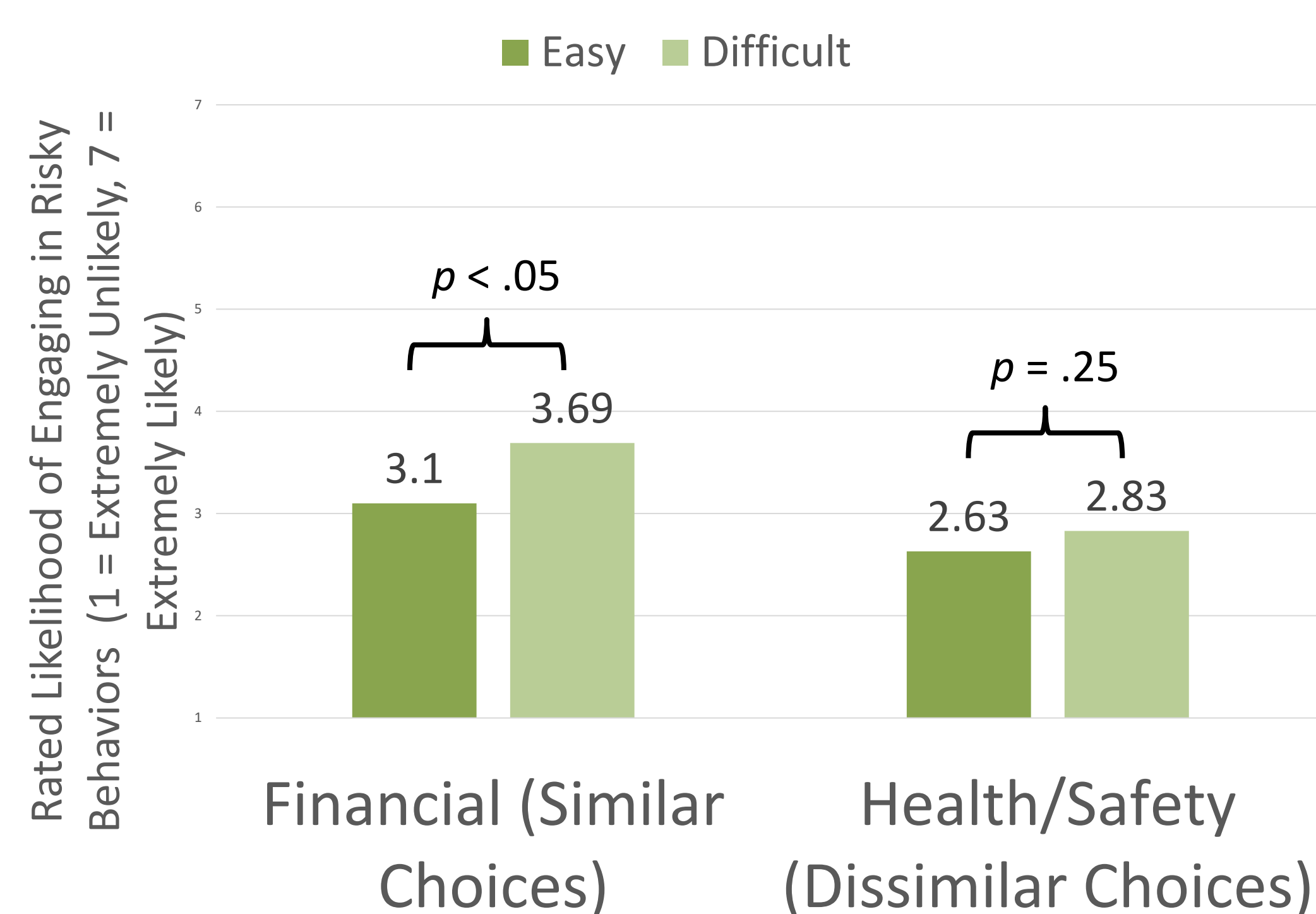
- Consumers infer that they will make similar choices in the future when current choices feel easy versus difficult.
- This is because consumers interpret choices that feel easy to make to be more diagnostic of who they are and what they are like.

### Background & Aim

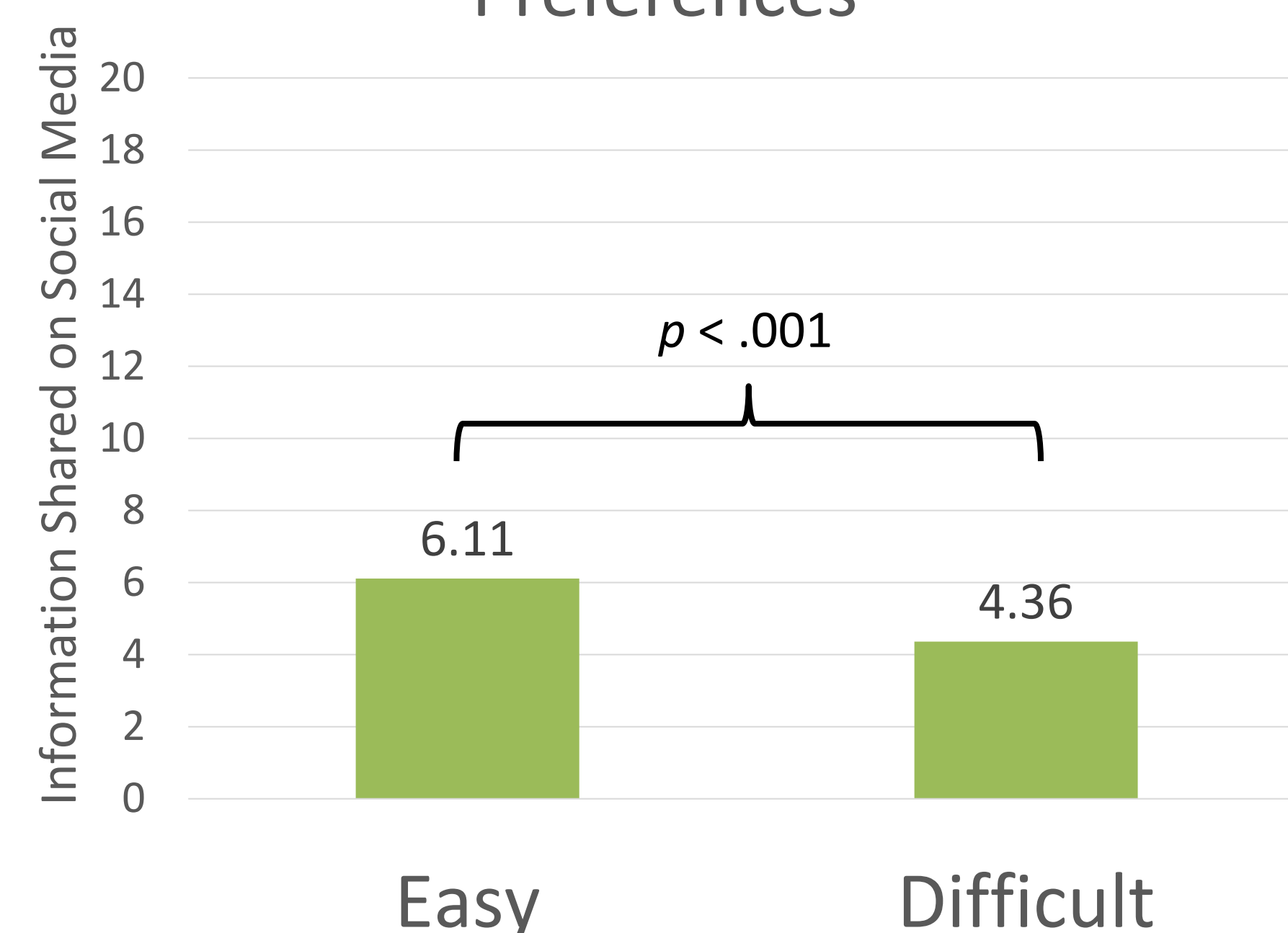
- Although the impact of choices on self inferences is well-documented (Bem, 1972), little is known about the impact of the subjective ease or difficulty of those choices.
- How might choice difficulty influence the inferences people make about what their choices say who they are and whether they will make similar choices in the future?

## Results

Study 1: Choice Difficulty and Generalization of Risk Preferences

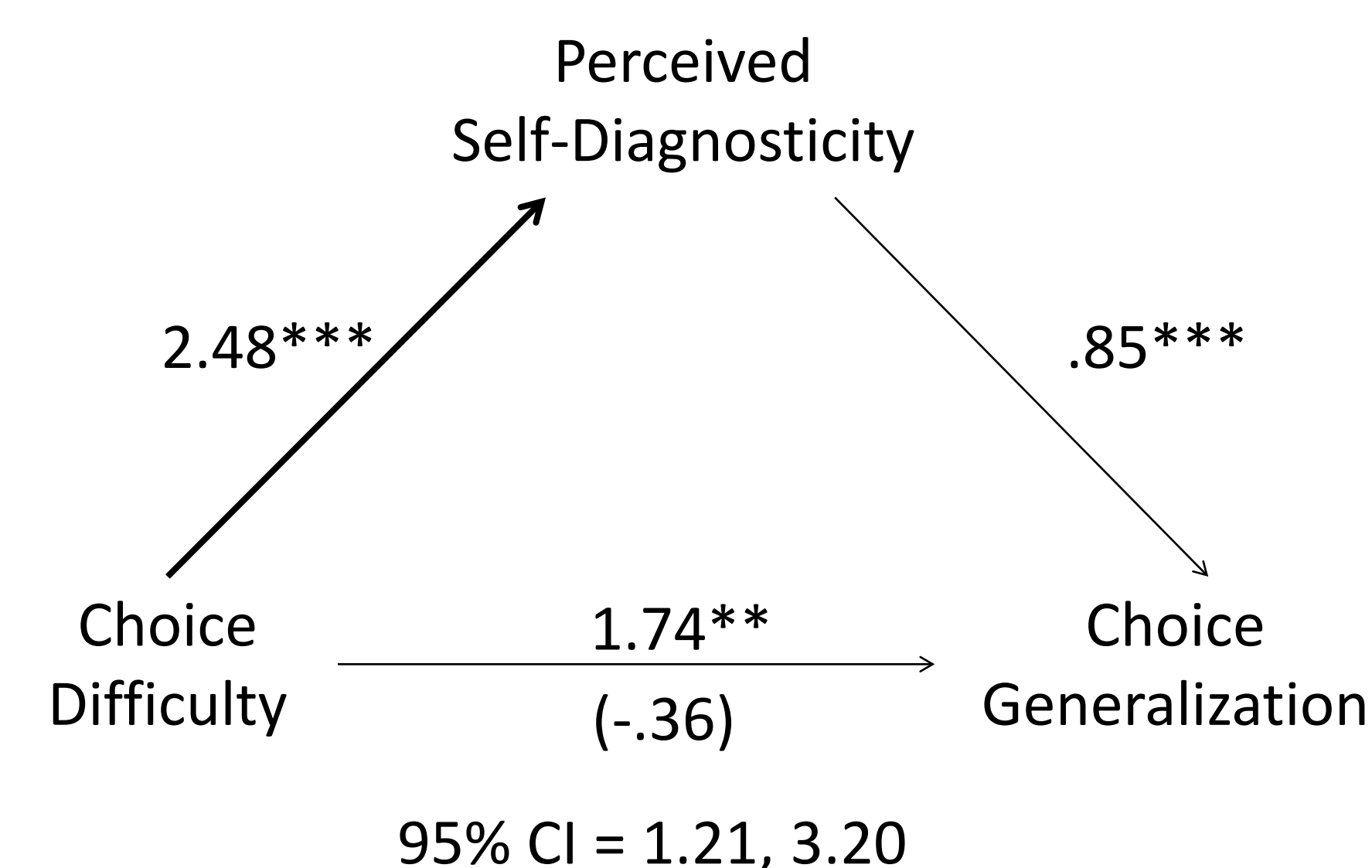


Study 2: Choice Difficulty and Generalization of Privacy Preferences



### Conclusions

- Ease of initial choice better predicted future preferences, but only in similar choice domains.
- This generalization is mediated by perceptions that easy choices were more diagnostic of the self.



## Approach

### Study 1: Choice Difficulty and Generalization of Risk Preferences

**IV:** We varied the felt difficulty of choices between lotteries by varying the format:

- | Easy                     | Difficult  |
|--------------------------|--|
| ○ 80% chance to win \$50 | ○ Eighty percent chance to win fifty dollars           |
| ○ 25% chance to win \$65 | ○ Twenty-five percent chance to win sixty-five dollars |

**DV:** We measured generalization of preferences for less risky options to a similar domain (financial choices) and a dissimilar domain (health/safety choices).

### Study 2: Choice Difficulty and Generalization of Privacy Preferences

**IV:** We varied the stated difficulty of agreeing to a music app's privacy agreement  
**DV:** We measured the amount of information people thought they would be willing to share on a similar social media app

**Mediator:** We also measured the perceived diagnosticity of the initial choice: "It suggests that I am the kind of person who is generally willing to share information on social media." (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree)

## Impact

- The unique feature about my innovation/research is its insight into how ease of consumer choice becomes more informative to the consumer.
- This addresses the problem of predicting when and how people generalize their previous decisions to new, but similar choices.
- Marketers especially stand to benefit from more knowledge about how choices in the market are made and how likely they are to be made again. The demonstrated mechanism of generalization shows the importance of making information digestible for target audiences, as future decisions may depend on it.

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