You Must Have a Preference:

The Impact of No Preference Communication on Joint Decision Making

Web Appendix

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TABLE W1
SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Main Studies					
Study	***Context***	***Hypotheses***	***Design***	***Main Findings***	***Mediation, Moderation***
Pilot study	Choice of restaurant	H_1	2 (No preference vs. Explicit preference)	When decision makers receive no preference (vs. explicit preference) communication in a joint decision, they infer that the co-consumer has undisclosed preferences.	
Study 1	Choice of restaurant (five different no preference phrases)	$H_{2a\text{-}b}$	2 (No preference vs. Explicit preference)	No preference communication led to greater decision difficulty for the decision maker, compared to explicit preference communication. This effect was driven by decision makers' perceptions of undisclosed preferences.	Mediator: Perception of undisclosed preferences
Study 2	Choice of restaurant	$H_{3a\text{-}b}$	2 (Decision maker vs. Co-consumer) × 2 (No preference vs. Explicit preference)	No preference communication increased decision makers decision difficulty, compared to the co-consumer's predictions. Further, no preference communication led to greater decision difficulty for the decision maker, compared to explicit preference communication.	Mediator: Perception of undisclosed preferences
Study 3	General joint decision	$H_{3a\text{-}b}$	2 (Decision maker vs. Co-consumer) × 3 (No preference vs. Undisclosed preference reinforced vs. Undisclosed preference diminished)	No preference communication increased decision makers decision difficulty, compared to the co-consumer's predictions, in the control condition and the undisclosed preference reinforced condition. However, decision makers in the undisclosed preference diminished condition experienced similar levels of decision difficulty as co-consumers predicted.	Moderator: Perception of undisclosed preferences
Study 4	Choice of snack to consumer together (Real interaction)	$H_{4a\text{-}b}$	2 (No preference vs. Explicit preference)	No preference communication led to greater decision difficulty for the decision maker and less liking of the co-consumer, compared to explicit preference communication.	
Study 5	Choice of movie to watch together (incentive-compatible)	$H_{5a\text{-}b}$	4 (No preference vs. Explicit similar-preference vs. Explicit dissimilar-preference vs. Alone)	No preference communication resulted in decision makers choosing a less preferred movie, compared to when they chose a movie to watch alone and compared to explicit similar-preference communication. Decision makers in the no preference communication condition chose a movie equally less preferred as those in the explicit dissimilar-preference communication condition. *(Real joint decision)*	

Study 6	Choice of online game to play together (incentive-compatible)	H_{5b-c}	3 (No preference vs. Explicit similar-preference vs. Explicit dissimilar-preference)	No preference communication led to greater decision difficulty for the decision maker, choice of a less preferred game topic, and lower enjoyment of the joint consumption experience, compared to explicit similar-preference communication. No preference communication led to less decision difficulty for the decision maker, choice of a more preferred game topic, and similarly low enjoyment of the joint consumption experience, compared to explicit dissimilar-preference communication. *(Real joint decision and consumption)*	Mediator: Perception of undisclosed preferences

Web Appendix Studies					
Study	***Context***	***Hypotheses***	***Design***	***Main Findings***	***Mediation, Moderation***
Web Appendix Study 1	Recall of past joint decision	H_{3a}	2 (Decision maker vs. Co-consumer)	Decision makers recalled greater decision difficulty and perceived undisclosed preferences after receiving no preference communication, compared to what the co-consumers recalled anticipating.	
Web Appendix Study 2	Choice of movie to watch together		3 (No preference vs. Explicit similar- preference vs. Explicit dissimilar-preference)	Decision makers believed that the co-consumer's true preferences would be more dissimilar to their own preferences when they communicated no preference, compared to explicit similar-preference, but less dissimilar compared to explicit dissimilar-preference.	
Web Appendix Study 3	Choice of restaurant (five different no preference phrases)	H_{3a}	2 (Decision maker vs. Co-consumer)	No preference communication increased decision makers decision difficulty, compared to the co-consumer's predictions.	
Web Appendix Study 4	Choice of restaurant	H_{2a-b}+H_{4a-b}	2 (No preference vs. Explicit preference)	No preference communication led to greater decision difficulty for the decision maker and less liking of the co-consumer, compared to explicit preference communication. These effects were driven by decision makers' perceptions of undisclosed preferences.	Mediator: Perception of undisclosed preferences
Web Appendix Study 5	Choice of movie to watch together (co-consumer's perspective)		3 (No preference vs. Explicit similar- preference vs. Explicit dissimilar-preference)	Co-consumers anticipate that no preference communication would lead to decision makers to choose of a movie they prefer, just as much as they would after an explicit similar-preference communication. Co-consumers also anticipate that no preference communication would lead decision makers to choose a movie that they prefer more, compared to explicit dissimilar-preference communication.	

Web Appendix Study 6	Choice of game to play together (incentive-compatible)		2 (No preference communication vs. No communication)	No preference communication led to greater decision difficulty for the decision maker, compared to no communication.	Mediator: Perception of undisclosed preferences
Web Appendix Study 7	Choice of restaurant	H_{2a}	2 (No preference vs. Explicit preference) × 3 (A person one just met vs. Friend vs. Spouse)	Regardless of relationship closeness with the co-consumer, no preference communication led to greater decision difficulty for the decision maker, compared to explicit preference communication.	Moderator: Relationship closeness
Web Appendix Study 8	General joint decision		2 (No preference vs. Explicit preference)	Co-consumers were seen as more annoying and less helpful when they communicate no preference, compared to when they explicitly communicate their preference.	

WEB APPENDIX A
(STUDY 1)

PRETEST OF NO PREFERENCE COMMUNICATION PHRASES FOR STUDY 1

A pretest was conducted to select externally valid phrases that consumers frequently use to convey no preference to the other party for main Study 1.

Design and Procedure

A total of 100 individuals (M_{age} = 32.34, 43.0% female) were recruited on MTurk for this study. Participants were asked to recall one situation where they had "difficulties making a joint decision because the other person was not clear about what their preferences were." Participants were prompted to think about what the other person said that made their preferences unclear and were asked to provide, as much as possible, direct quotes.

Results

Sixty-four participants provided direct quotes that were used often in real joint consumption decisions and were retained for analysis. Remaining 36 participants indicated descriptions of the situation (e.g., "They did not offer an opinion" or "They were ambiguous") or behaviors (e.g., "They just mumbled" or "They said nothing"), rather than a verbal quote.

The five phrases that were mentioned most frequently included (numbers in brackets represent the frequency of mention): "I don't care" (26.6%), "I don't know" (18.8%), "I'll go wherever" (7.8%), "Let's go where you want" (7.8%), and "You decide" (6.3%). These five phrases were employed as stimuli of no preference expressions in the main Study 1. Other phrases mentioned include "whatever you want works for me" (3%) and "I don't mind any of these places" (2%). The other 16 participants that provided direct quotes had more variation, such as answers more specific to their own decision task (e.g., "I had Mexican food yesterday. What else?").

PAIRWISE COMPARISONS OF 10 PHRASES FOR DECISION DIFFICULTY

		No preference phrase *Mean (SD)*					**Explicit preference phrase** *Mean (SD)*				
		"Let's go where you want" M = 4.45 (.76)	"I don't know" M = 4.21 (1.92)	"You decide" M = 3.83 (1.68)	"I don't care" M = 3.78 (1.98)	"I'll go wherever" M = 3.28 (1.53)	"I'm leaning toward option A" M = 2.76 (1.07)	"Option A sounds good to me" M = 2.64 (1.35)	"I prefer option A" M = 2.33 (1.31)	"I like option A" M = 2.28 (1.41)	"Let's go to option A" M = 2.06 (.98)
No preference phrase *Mean (SD)*	"Let's go where you want" M = 4.45 (.76)		$p = .576$	$p = .145$	$p = .130$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$
	"I don't know" M = 4.21 (1.92)	$p = .576$		$p = .357$	$p = .318$	$p = .027$	$p < .001$	$p = .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$

	"You decide" M = 3.83 (1.68)	$p = .145$	$p = .357$		$p = .916$	$p = .182$	$p = .014$	$p = .005$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$
	"I don't care" M = 3.78 (1.98)	$p = .130$	$p = .318$	$p = .916$		$p = .234$	$p = .021$	$p = .009$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$
	"I'll go wherever" M = 3.28 (1.53)	$p = .007$	$p = .027$	$p = .182$	$p = .234$		$p = .231$	$p = .133$	$p = .024$	$p = .016$	$p = .003$
Explicit preference phrase *Mean (SD)*	"I'm leaning toward option A" M = 2.76 (1.07)	$p < .001$	$p = .001$	$p = .014$	$p = .021$	$p = .231$		$p = .778$	$p = .326$	$p = .266$	$p = .105$
	"Option A sounds good to me" M = 2.64 (1.35)	$p < .001$	$p = .001$	$p = .005$	$p = .009$	$p = .133$	$p = .778$		$p = .482$	$p = .404$	$p = .178$
	"I prefer option A" M = 2.33 (1.31)	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p = .024$	$p = .326$	$p = .482$		$p = .898$	$p = .513$
	"I like option A" M = 2.28 (1.41)	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p = .016$	$p = .266$	$p = .404$	$p = .898$		$p = .594$
	"Let's go to option A" M = 2.06 (.98)	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p = .003$	$p = .105$	$p = .178$	$p = .513$	$p = .594$	

PAIRWISE COMPARISONS OF 10 PHRASES FOR PERCEPTION OF UNDISCLOSED PREFERENCES

		No preference phrase *Mean (SD)*					**Explicit preference phrase** *Mean (SD)*				
No preference phrase *Mean (SD)*		"Let's go where you want" M = 3.93 (1.47)	"I don't know" M = 3.23 (1.56)	"You decide" M = 3.16 (1.88)	"I don't care" M = 3.70 (1.84)	"I'll go wherever" M = 3.22 (1.98)	"I'm leaning toward option A" M = 2.17 (1.54)	"Option A sounds good to me" M = 1.86 (1.29)	"I prefer option A" M = 1.42 (.64)	"I like option A" M = 1.76 (1.06)	"Let's go to option A" M = 1.36 (.71)
	"Let's go where you want" M = 3.93 (1.47)		$p = .113$	$p = .074$	$p = .600$	$p = .105$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$

	"I don't know" M = 3.23 (1.56)	$p = .113$		$p = .856$	$p = .278$	$p = .983$	$p = .016$	$p = .002$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$
	"You decide" M = 3.16 (1.88)	$p = .074$	$p = .856$		$p = .199$	$p = .872$	$p = .023$	$p = .003$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$
	"I don't care" M = 3.70 (1.84)	$p = .600$	$p = .278$	$p = .199$		$p = .264$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$
	"I'll go wherever" M = 3.22 (1.98)	$p = .105$	$p = .983$	$p = .872$	$p = .264$		$p = .016$	$p = .002$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$
Explicit preference phrase *Mean (SD)*	"I'm leaning toward option A" M = 2.17 (1.54)	$p < .001$	$p = .016$	$p = .023$	$p < .001$	$p = .016$		$p = .500$	$p = .089$	$p = .351$	$p = .065$
	"Option A sounds good to me" M = 1.86 (1.29)	$p < .001$	$p = .002$	$p = .003$	$p < .001$	$p = .002$	$p = .500$		$p = .304$	$p = .810$	$p = .242$
	"I prefer option A" M = 1.42 (.64)	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p = .089$	$p = .304$		$p = .414$	$p = .893$
	"I like option A" M = 1.76 (1.06)	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p = .351$	$p = .810$	$p = .414$		$p = .337$
	"Let's go to option A" M = 1.36 (.71)	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p = .065$	$p = .242$	$p = .893$	$p = .337$	

WEB APPENDIX B
(STUDY 4)

ABRIDGED COMMUNICATION TASK (SEDIKIDES ET AL. 1999)

LIST I

1. What is your first name?
2. Where are you from?
3. What year are you at the University?
4. What are your hobbies?
5. What would you like to do after graduating from the University?

LIST II

1. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?
2. What is one thing happening in your life that makes you stressed out?
3. If you could have one wish granted, what would that be?
4. What is one recent accomplishment that you are proud of?

STIMULI: SNACKS SHOWN AND DISTRIBUTED

WEB APPENDIX C
(STUDY 5)

EXAMPLE OF MOVIE CHOICE MEASURE AND CODING PROCEDURE

Participants chose one out of five different movie options (Movies A to E), anchored based on their most preferred and least preferred movie genres that they previously indicated in a ranking task. As an example, if a participant had ranked comedy as their most preferred genre, and action as their least preferred genre, they were presented with the following question for their choice dependent variable:

<Movie A>	**<Movie B>**	**<Movie C>**	**<Movie D>**	**<Movie E>**
		Strength of genre (1-5)		
Comedy: 5	Comedy: 4	Comedy: 3	Comedy: 2	Comedy: 1
Action: 1	Action: 2	Action: 3	Action: 4	Action: 5

After data collection, we later coded Movie A as '1', Movie B as '2', Movie C as '3', Movie D as '4', and Movie E as '5'. Thus, a movie choice coded closer to 1 indicates that the decision maker chose a movie that was more similar to their most preferred genre, while a movie choice coded closer to 5 indicates the decision maker chose a movie that was more similar to their least preferred genre.

BREAKDOWN OF MOVIE CHOICE BY CONDITION

No preference condition

Movie 1 (most preferred)	**10.2%**
Movie 2	**4.1%**
Movie 3	**20.4%**
Movie 4	**26.5%**
Movie 5 (least preferred)	**38.8%**

Explicit dissimilar-preference condition

Movie 1 (most preferred)	**15.8%**
Movie 2	**NA**
Movie 3	**NA**
Movie 4	**7.9%**
Movie 5 (least preferred)	**76.3%**

Explicit similar-preference condition

Movie 1 (most preferred)	**16.2%**
Movie 2	**21.6%**
Movie 3	**54.1%**
Movie 4	**5.4%**

Movie 5 (least preferred)	**2.7%**

Alone condition

Movie 1 (most preferred)	**26.8%**
Movie 2	**26.8%**
Movie 3	**19.5%**
Movie 4	**17.1%**
Movie 5 (least preferred)	**9.8%**

WEB APPENDIX D
(STUDY 6)

EXAMPLE OF GAME CHOICE MEASURE AND CODING PROCEDURE

Participants chose one out of five different question options (Questions A to E), anchored based on their most preferred and least preferred trivia topics that they previously indicated in a ranking task. As an example, if a participant had ranked technology as their most preferred topic, and finance as their least preferred topic, they were presented with the following question for their choice dependent variable:

<Question A>	**<Question B>**	**<Question C>**	**<Question D>**	**<Question E>**
		Type of topic each question is about (0-100%)		
Technology: 90%	Technology: 70%	Technology: 50%	Technology: 30%	Technology: 10%
Finance: 10%	Finance: 30%	Finance: 50%	Finance: 70%	Finance: 90%

After data collection, we later coded Question A as '1', Question B as '2', Question C as '3', Question D as '4', Question E as '5'. Thus, a game choice coded closer to 1 indicates that the decision maker chose a question that was more similar to their most preferred topic, while a game choice coded closer to 5 indicates the decision maker chose a question that was more similar to their least preferred topic.

BREAKDOWN OF GAME CHOICE BY CONDITION

No preference condition

Game 1 (most preferred)	**50.8%**
Game 2	**29.4%**
Game 3	**18.6%**
Game 4	**.6%**
Game 5 (least preferred)	**.6%**

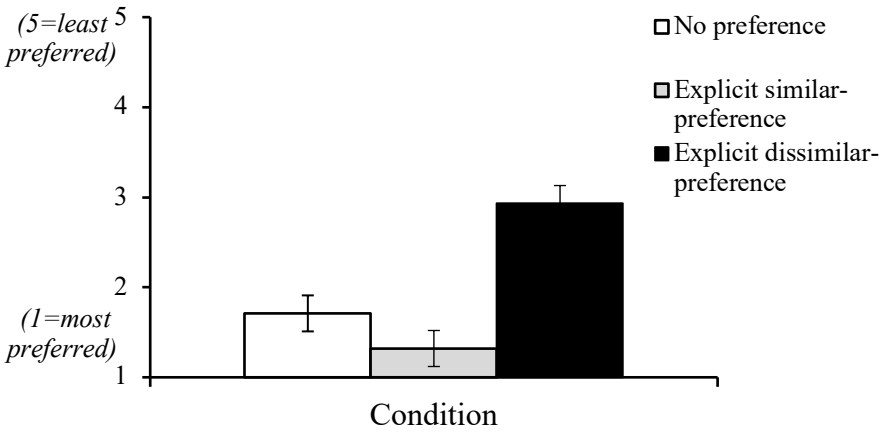
Explicit similar-preference condition

Game 1 (most preferred)	**75.7%**
Game 2	**16.9%**
Game 3	**7.3%**
Game 4	**NA**
Game 5 (least preferred)	**NA**

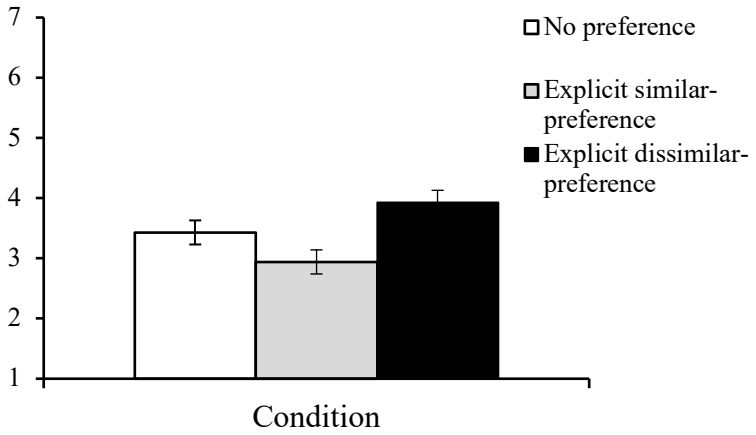
Explicit dissimilar-preference condition

Movie 1 (most preferred)	**11.3%**
Movie 2	**9.6%**
Movie 3	**61.0%**
Movie 4	**11.3%**
Movie 5 (least preferred)	**6.8%**

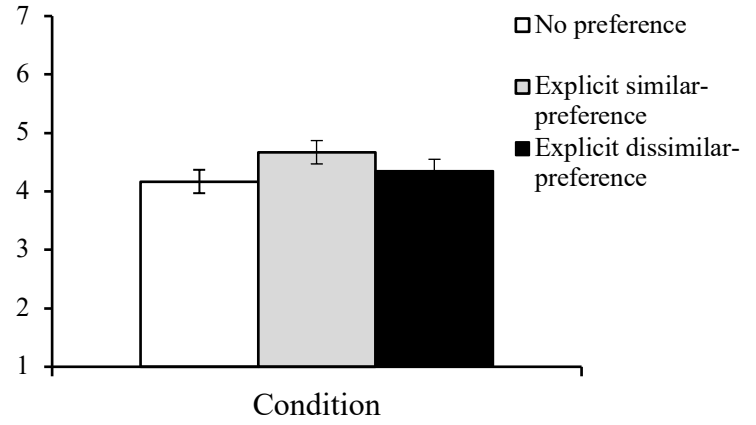
GAME CHOICE



DECISION DIFFICULTY



CONSUMPTION ENJOYMENT



WEB APPENDIX E (FACTOR ANALYSES)

Study 1

Total variance explained

		Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.791	69.770	69.770	2.791	69.770	69.770	2.105	52.619	52.619
2	.770	19.249	89.018	.770	19.249	89.018	1.456	36.400	89.018
3	.366	9.144	98.163						
4	.073	1.837	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotated component matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Decision Difficulty 1: "To what extent do you feel they make it easier for you to decide?"	.149	**.944**
Decision Difficulty 2: "How difficult would it be to make the decision"	.546	**.673**
Perception of undisclosed preferences 1: "Do you think they are hiding their true preferences from you?"	**.944**	.242
Perception of undisclosed preferences 2: "Do you think they are trying to keep their true preference from you?"	**.945**	.233

Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Study 2

Total variance explained

		Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.454	61.338	61.338	2.454	61.338	61.338	2.412	60.302	60.302
2	.984	24.610	85.949	.984	24.610	85.949	1.026	25.647	85.949
3	.368	9.207	95.156						
4	.194	4.844	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotated component matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Decision Difficulty 1: "To what extent do you feel they [you] were making it easier for you [the other person] to decide?"	**.904**	.137
Decision Difficulty 2: "To what extent do you feel they [you] were making it easier versus more difficult for you [the other person] to decide?"	**.916**	.126
Decision Difficulty 3: "How much more effort do you think you [the other person] would need to put into making this decision?"	**.867**	-.070
Perception of undisclosed preferences: "To what extent will you [do you think your friend will] believe that your friend [you] actually prefer(s) one option over others"	.065	**.993**

Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Study 4

Total variance explained

		Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.215	60.762	60.762	1.215	60.762	60.762	1.000	50.000	50.000
2	.785	39.238	100.000	.785	39.238	100.000	1.000	50.000	100.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotated component matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Decision Difficulty: "To what extent did you feel that your task partner was making it more easy versus more difficult for you to decide?"	**.994**	-.108
Liking of Co-consumer: "How much do you like your partner"	-.108	**.994**

Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Study 6

Total variance explained

		Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.695	42.383	42.383	1.695	42.383	42.383	1.610	40.245	40.245
2	1.030	25.749	68.133	1.030	25.749	68.133	1.115	27.887	68.113
3	.886	22.144	90.277						
4	.389	9.723	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotated component matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
Decision Difficulty: "Given that they said [preference communication], to what extent do you think s/he made it easier for you to decide?"	.079	-.053	**.995**
Consumption Enjoyment: "How much did you like playing Trivia with your task partner?"	-.051	**.997**	-.053
Perception of undisclosed preferences 1: "Did you think that your task partner was hiding his/her true preferences from you?"	**.891**	-.064	.075
Perception of undisclosed preferences 2: "To what extent did you think that your task partner was trying to keep their true preference from you?"	**.898**	-.015	.045

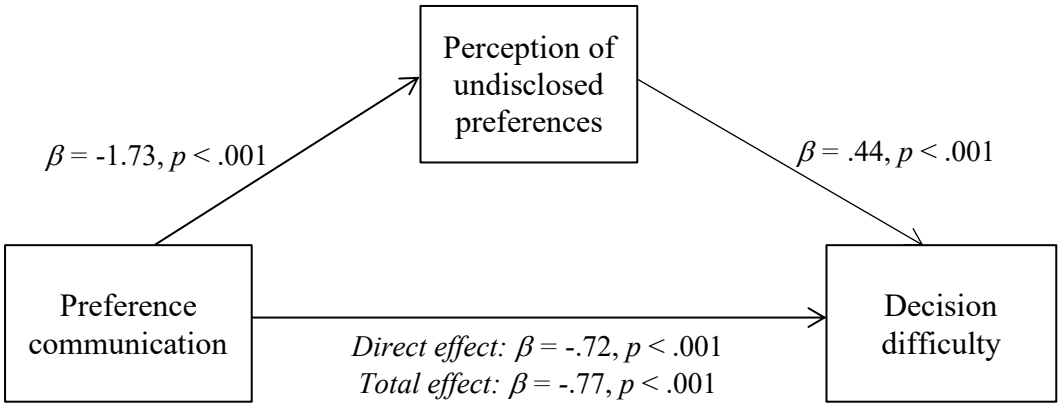
Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

WEB APPENDIX F
(MEDIATION ANALYSES)

Study 1

MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR DECISION DIFFICULTY

A bootstrap mediation analysis (Model 4, Hayes 2017) with preference communication as the independent variable, perception of undisclosed preferences as the mediator, and decision difficulty as the dependent measure revealed a significant mediation effect (β = -.77, SE = .15, 95% CI: [-1.096, -.501]).

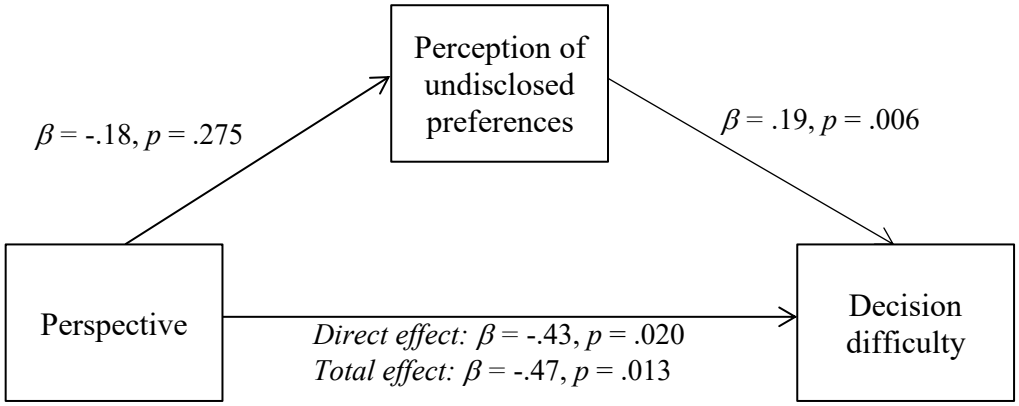


Study 2

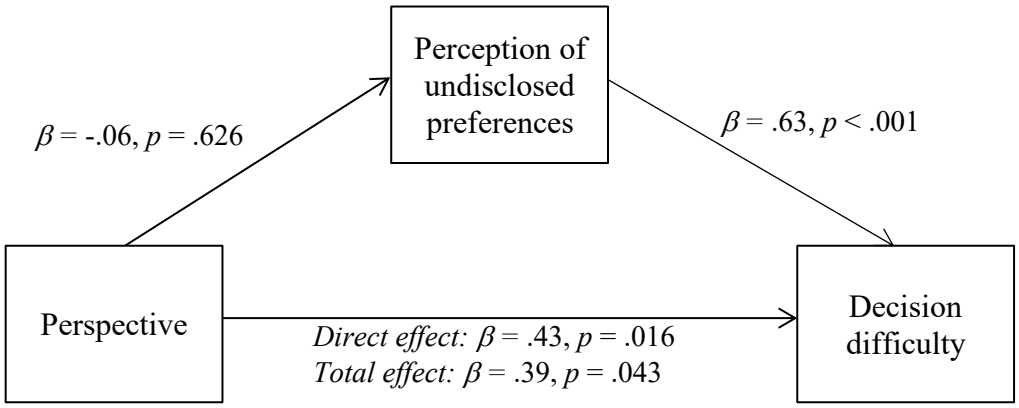
MODERATED MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR DECISION DIFFICULTY

A bootstrap moderated mediation analysis (Model 7, Hayes 2017) with perspective as the independent variable, preference communication as the moderator, perception of undisclosed preferences as the mediator, and decision difficulty as the dependent measure revealed a significant moderated mediation effect (index = .06, SE = .04, 95% CI: [.001, .172]).

No preference communication:

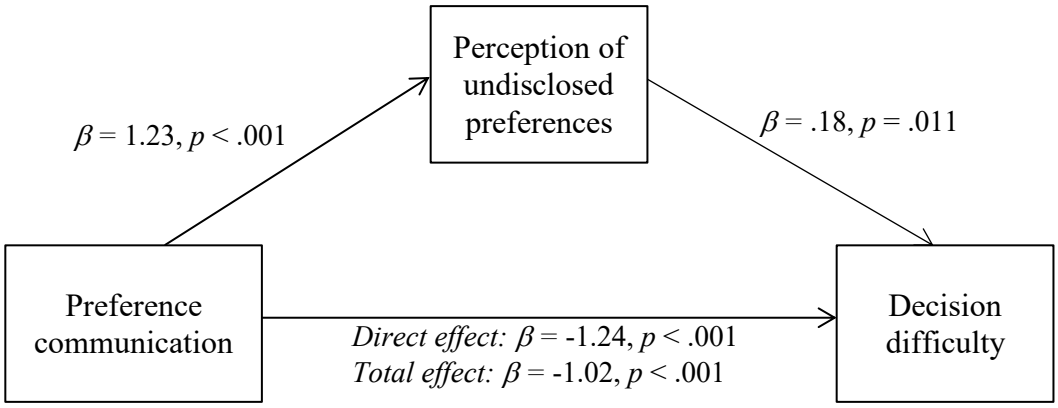


Explicit preference communication:



MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR DECISION DIFFICULTY AMONG DECISION MAKERS

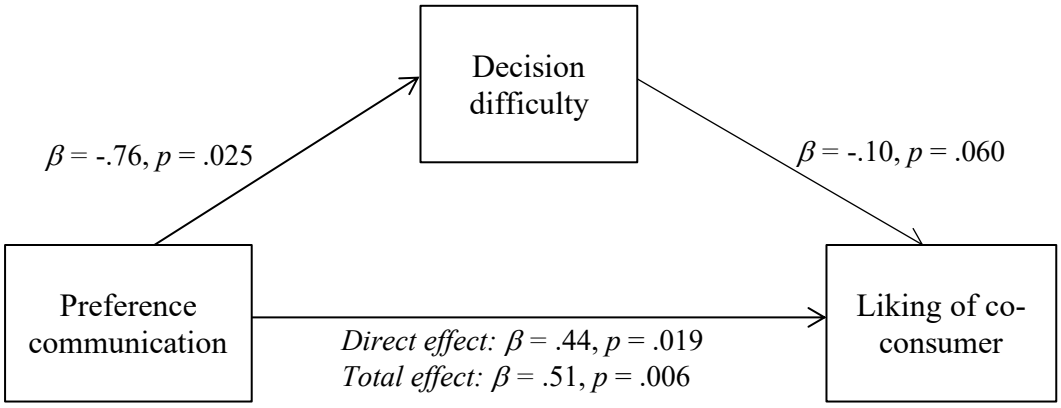
A bootstrap mediation analysis (Model 4, Hayes 2017) with preference communication as the independent variable, perception of undisclosed preferences as the mediator, and decision difficulty as the dependent measure revealed a significant mediation effect (β = .23; SE = .10; 95% CI: [.029, .437]).



Study 4

EXPLORATORY MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR LIKING OF CO-CONSUMER

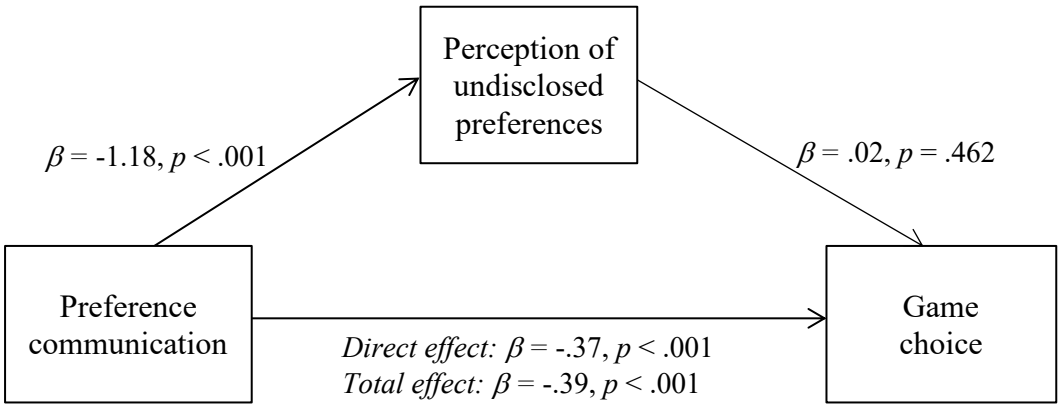
A bootstrap mediation analysis (Model 4, Hayes 2017) with preference communication as the independent variable, decision difficulty as the mediator, and liking of co-consumer as the dependent measure revealed a non-significant mediation effect (β = .07, SE = .06, 95% CI: [-.007, .218]).



Study 6

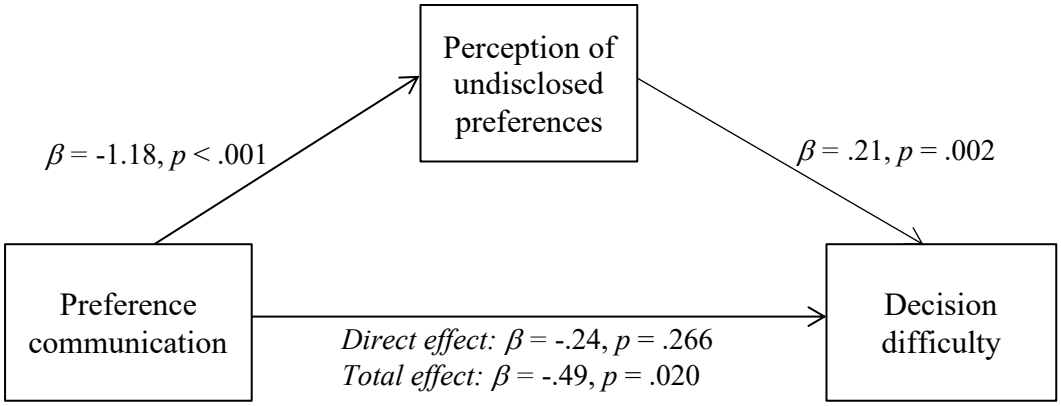
MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR CHOICE

A bootstrap mediation analysis (Model 4, Hayes 2017) with preference communication as the independent variable, perception of undisclosed preferences as the mediator, and game choice as the dependent measure revealed a significant mediation effect (β = -.02, SE = .03, 95% CI: [-.063, -.002]).



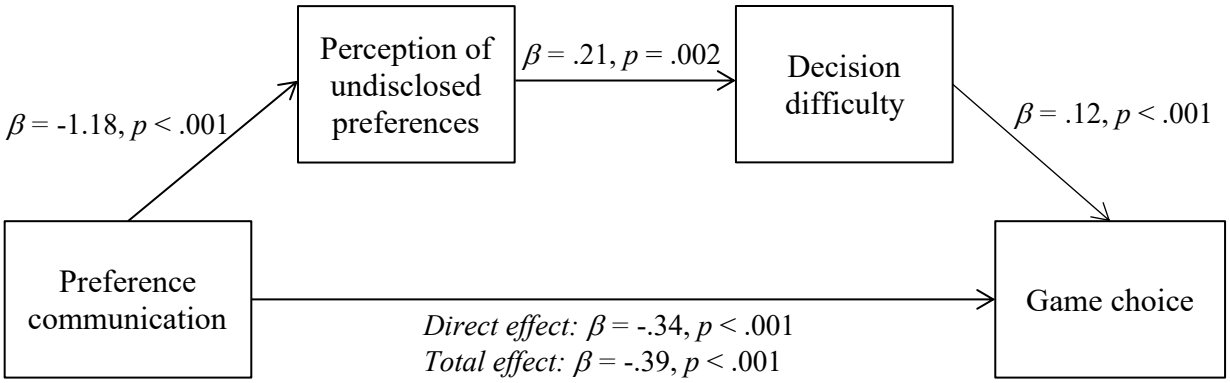
MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR DECISION DIFFICULTY

A bootstrap mediation analysis (Model 4, Hayes 2017) with preference communication as the independent variable, perception of undisclosed preferences as the mediator, and decision difficulty as the dependent measure revealed a significant mediation effect (β = -.24, SE = .09, 95% CI: [-.437, -.089]).



EXPLORATORY SERIAL MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR CHOICE

A bootstrap serial mediation analysis (Model 6, Hayes 2017) preference communication (no preference vs. explicit similar-preference) as the independent variable, perception of undisclosed preferences as the first mediator, decision difficulty as the second mediator, and choice as the dependent measure revealed a significant serial mediation effect *(β* = -.03, SE = .01, 95% CI: [-.056, -.008]).



WEB APPENDIX STUDY 1

This study had several goals. We aimed to demonstrate the discrepancy in decision difficulty (H3a) using consumers' past experiences of real joint decision making. We also aimed to use consumers' recollection of these past experiences to provide insight for our proposed mechanism of perception of undisclosed preferences. We measured the frequency of instances that consumers recalled having a preference yet communicated that they have none (*co-consumers*), as well as the frequency of instances consumers recalled being told by others that they have no preference, yet intuit that they actually did (*decision makers*). In addition, we explored co-consumers' stated motives for expressing that they have no preference, and compared them to decision makers' stated interpretation of such motives. To demonstrate the prevalence of no preference communication, we also measured the frequency at which consumers receive or communicate no preference expressions in real-life joint decisions.

Design and Procedure

We recruited 327 participants (M_{age} = 35.26, 49.5% female) from Amazon Mechanical Turk ("MTurk") in exchange for monetary compensation. Participants were asked to recall a situation where they made a joint consumption decision with another person. Specifically, they were asked to "think about situations in which you and someone you know needed to make a joint decision such as which restaurant to go to, which movie to watch, which food to order, which gift to buy together for a third party, etc." Participants were then randomly assigned to one of two perspective conditions in a between-subjects design and were asked to recall a situation where either the other party (*decision maker* condition) or they themselves (*co-consumer* condition) expressed having no specific preference.

Measures

Recalled frequency of no preference communications. We first measured the frequency with which participants recalled either communicating to others or receiving from others a no preference expression in a joint decision making context (1 = "never", 2 = "sometimes", 3 = "about half of the time", 4 = "most of the time", 5 = "always").

Recalled decision difficulty. Participants were then asked to evaluate their [the decision makers'] decision difficulty after receiving the co-consumer's no preference expression. Specifically, *decision makers* [*co-consumers*] were asked "When hearing they [stating you] had no specific preferences, to what extent did you feel they [you] were making it easier for you [the other person] to decide?" on a 5-point scale (1 = "a great deal", 5 = "not at all").

Recalled frequency of perceived (actual) undisclosed preferences. Next, we measured decision makers' belief that the co-consumer truly had a specific preference (although they expressed no preference) and compared it to co-consumers' reported preferences. Specifically, participants in the *decision maker* condition rated "How frequently do you believe that other people mentioned to you having no specific preferences, although they did have at least a slight preference for one option over the others?", on a 7-point scale (1 = "never", 7 = "always"). Conversely, in the *co-consumer* condition, participants indicated their recollection of expressing no preferences while actually having a specific preference. Specifically, participants rated "How frequently have you mentioned having no specific preferences although you did have at least a slight preference for one option over the others?", also on a 7-point scale (1 = "never", 7 = "always").

Recalled perceived (actual) reasons for no preference communication. Finally, we explored stated motives for no preference expression. Using an open-ended response, we asked participants in the *decision maker* [*co-consumer*] condition to write about reasons they believed others communicated to them [they had for stating] that they had no preference. These written responses were then coded by two research assistants, blind to the hypotheses, into nine categories that convey various reasons for expressing no preference (e.g., impression management; 89.6% agreement; disagreements were resolved through discussion), using a binary scale (0 = absent, 1 = present). The nine coding categories were determined a priori by the researchers, to include a variety of reasons pertaining to consideration of the decision maker's preference and decision making process, the co-consumer's own preferences, impression management and relationship management motives, expertise, personality traits, as well as "other" reasons and non-informative responses.

Results

Recalled frequency of no preference communication. Most participants indicated that they have encountered no preference expressions, whether as co-consumers or decision makers. More than 60% of participants in both conditions reported communicating or receiving no preference expressions about half of the time they made joint decisions or more (i.e., selected 3 or above on the 5-point scale). Moreover, less than 2% of participants indicated they never communicate or receive no preference expressions (i.e., selected 1 on the scale). No difference was found across conditions (p = .223), suggesting that there was no differential recall of this common communication practice for participants in the role of a co-consumer versus a decision maker. The full results for this measure are detailed below.

FULL FREQUENCY OF RECALLED NO PREFERENCE COMMUNICATION

Co-consumers	
Always	**3.1%**
Most of the time	**29.6%**
About half the time	**35.8%**
Sometimes	**29.6%**
Never	**1.9%**

Decision makers	
Always	**1.8%**
Most of the time	**23.5%**
About half the time	**38.6%**
Sometimes	**36.1%**
Never	**0.0%**

Recalled decision difficulty. Supporting H3a, there was a significant discrepancy in decision difficulty between decision makers and co-consumers. Specifically, according to participants' recollection of their past joint decisions, decision makers experienced significantly

greater decision difficulty (M = 3.59, SD = 1.13) than co-consumers expected decision makers would experience (M = 2.77, SD = 1.03; $t(326) = 6.87$, $p < .001$).

Recalled frequency of perceived (actual) undisclosed preferences. Decision makers were more likely to suspect that co-consumers had undisclosed preferences (M = 3.96, SD = 1.24) compared to co-consumers' reported likelihood of actually hiding their preferences (M = 3.43, SD = 1.20 ; $t(326) = -3.95$, $p < .001$). To illustrate, 57.8% of decision makers suspected that the co-consumer actually had preferences half of the time or more (i.e., selected 4 or higher on the scale), while only 39.5% of co-consumers indicated actually had preferences when they expressed no preference (χ^2 (1) = 11.02, p = .001).

Recalled perceived (actual) reasons for no preference communication. From the coded results, several distinct and informative patterns emerged. First, co-consumers indicated that they considered the *decision maker's* decision making process when they express no preference, significantly more than the decision makers referred to such a motivation (16.3% vs. 7.1%; χ^2 (1) = 6.93, p = .008). Further, co-consumers more frequently indicated that they express no preference because they care about the decision maker's preferences, while decision makers themselves were less inclined to suggest that co-consumers would be motivated by this (36.1% vs. 26.5%; χ^2 (1) = 3.66, p = .056). Finally, decision makers were significantly more likely to infer self-presentation motives of the co-consumer, for instance, that impression management was driving their no preference expression, compared to what co-consumers actually reported (24.1% vs. 7.8%; χ^2 (1) = 16.52, $p < .001$). We summarize the detailed analysis results of the open-ended responses below.

FULL ANALYSIS OF RECALLED REASONS OF NO PREFERENCE COMMUNICATION

Category	Description and examples	% mentioned in Decision maker condition	% mentioned in Co-consumer condition
Caring about decision maker's preferences	If the reason indicated orientation/thoughts about the decision maker's preferences. (e.g., "I didn't want to lead them a certain direction. I wanted them to choose, because I cared about making them happy.")	26.5%	36.1%
Caring about decision maker's decision-making process	If the reason indicated orientation/thoughts about the decision maker's decision-making process. (e.g., "I didn't want someone else to compromise for my satisfaction.")	7.1%	16.3%
Impression management	If the reason indicated orientation/thoughts about managing the co-consumer's impression or how they will be	24.1%	7.8%

	perceived by the decision maker. (e.g., “To be polite”)		
Relationship management	If the reason indicated maintaining and/or developing relationships with the decision maker. (e.g., “Usually I like to make sure the other person is happy and to avoid conflict.”)	28.8%	20.5%
Caring about co-consumer’s preferences	If the reason indicated orientation/thoughts about the co-consumer’s preferences. (e.g., “I really didn’t care”)	69.4%	74.7%
Knowledge and experience	If the reason indicated orientation/thoughts about the knowledge/expertise/skills in making the decision	11.8%	4.8%
Personality trait	If the reason indicated a personality trait	12.9%	25.3%
Other	If the reason did not fall into any of the aforementioned categories	1.2%	3%
Non-informative	If they did not give a specific reason	5.9%	3.6%

WEB APPENDIX STUDY 2

This study examined what decision makers of no preference communication infer is their "true" preference, compared to explicitly similar and explicitly dissimilar benchmarks.

Design, Procedure, and Measures

A total of 161 students at a large North American university (M_{age} = 19.83, 53.9% female) participated in the study. Similar to the procedure used in the main Study 5, participants were welcomed to a study about movie preferences and were first asked to rank-order five different movie genres (comedy, action, drama, science-fiction, and romance) according to their preferences. After completing this ranking, participants were asked to imagine that they are paired with another student to watch a movie clip together.

Participants were then randomly assigned to one of three preference communication conditions. In the *no preference* condition, participants read a message ostensibly sent by their partner saying "I have no preference, it's your call!". In the *explicit similar-preference* condition, decision makers received a message stating "I like [participant's highest-ranked option] the best, but it's your call!", where [participant's highest-ranked option] was filled in with the genre the participant indicated earlier to prefer the most. In the *explicit dissimilar-preference* condition, decision makers received a message stating "I like [participant's lowest-ranked option] the best, but it's your call!", where [participant's lowest-ranked option] was filled in with the participants indicated earlier to prefer the least.

All participants then rated "Do you think the other student's true movie preferences are similar to your own movie preferences or dissimilar?" (1 = "very similar, 7 = "very dissimilar").

Results

A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant omnibus effect of the three preference communication conditions on the perceived (dis)similarity of preferences ($F(2,158) = 91.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .538$). Specifically, participants inferred that a co-consumer who expressed no preference actually had preferences ($M = 4.17$, SD = 1.28) that were significantly more different than their own preferences (i.e., compared to a co-consumer who explicitly expressed having preferences similar to the participant; $M = 2.30$, SD = 1.33; $F(1,105) = 55.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .344$). At the same time, participants inferred that a co-consumer who expressed no preference actually had preferences ($M = 4.17$, SD = 1.28) that were significantly less different than their own preferences (i.e., compared to a co-consumer who explicitly expressed having preferences dissimilar to the participant; $M = 5.78$, SD = 1.40; $F(1,105) = 38.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .268$).

WEB APPENDIX STUDY 3

The purpose of Web Appendix Study 3 was to conceptually replicate the discrepancy in decision difficulty between those communicating having no preference and those receiving that communication (H3a), with ecologically valid no preference communication phrases.

Design, Procedure, and Measures

We recruited 726 online participants from MTurk (M_{age} = 38.24, 49.6% female) who read a scenario in which they were asked to imagine making a joint decision. We asked participants to imagine they were getting dinner with a friend and were trying to decide together which restaurant to go to out of three nearby restaurants. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of two perspective conditions: either their friend expressed no preference to them (*decision maker* condition) or they expressed no preference to their friend (*co-consumer* condition) regarding which restaurant to choose. Across the experimental conditions, we also varied the phrase used to express no preference with five different phrases used in the main Study 1. Thus, the study consisted of a 2 (perspective: *decision maker* vs. *co-consumer*) × 5 (no preference phrases: "I don't care" vs. "I don't know" vs. "I'll go wherever" vs. "Let's go where you want" vs. "You decide") between-subjects design.

As our main dependent variable, participants were asked to evaluate their [the decision maker's] difficulty in making a decision after receiving the co-consumer's no preference expression. Specifically, *decision makers* [*co-consumers*] were asked "When hearing they [stating you] had no specific preferences, to what extent did you feel they [you] were making it easier for you [the other person] to decide?" on a 5-point scale (1 = "a great deal", 5 = "not at all"). Thus, higher scores on this item indicate greater decision difficulty.

Next, we measured perceptions of undisclosed preferences, similar to that used in the main Study 2. Participants in the *decision maker* condition indicated the extent to which they believed the co-consumer actually *does* prefer one option over the other, while participants in the *co-consumer* condition indicated the extent to which they thought the decision maker would believe that they actually *do* prefer one option over the other (1 = "not at all", 7 = "very much").

Results

Decision difficulty. A 2 (perspective) × 5 (phrases of no preference) ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of perspective ($F(1,725) = 5.42$, $p = .020$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$). Supporting our prediction, decision makers felt that co-consumers who expressed no preference made the decision significantly more difficult for them ($M = 4.23$, SD = 1.97) than co-consumers anticipated ($M = 3.90$, SD = 1.92). There was also a main effect for the different no preference phrases ($F(1,725) = 6.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .036$). Importantly, the interaction between perspective and phrase was not significant ($F(1,725) = .69$, $p = .599$), indicating that regardless of the specific phrase used by the co-consumer to express no preference, decision makers experienced greater difficulty in making a joint decision compared to the difficulty expected by the co-consumers.

Perception of undisclosed preferences. The same 2-way ANOVA on perception of undisclosed preferences supported our proposed mechanism. There was a significant main effect of perspective ($F(1,725) = 15.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .021$), such that decision makers believed the co-consumers actually preferred one option over another ($M = 4.02$, SD = 1.68) significantly more than co-consumers expected ($M = 3.52$, SD = 1.73). There was no significant main effect

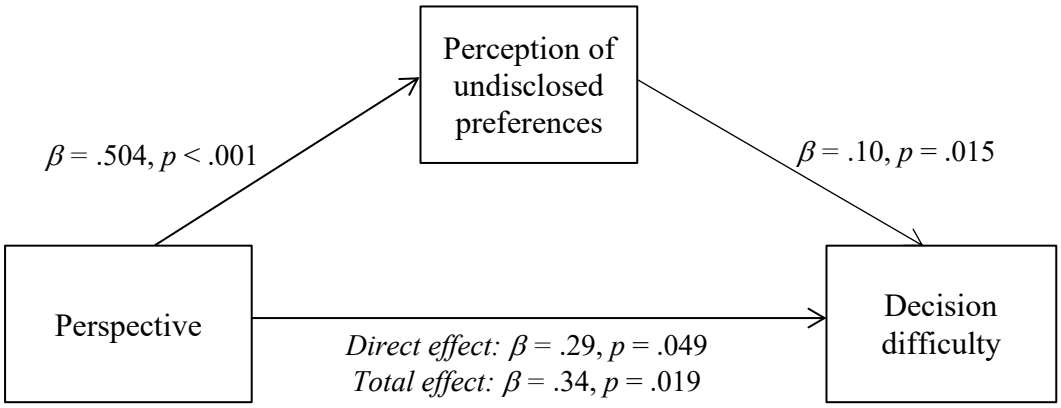
for the different no preference phrases ($F(1,725) = .64$, $p = .632$) nor an interaction effect ($F(1,725) = .30$, $p = .877$) on perception of undisclosed preferences.

Mediation analysis. A bootstrap mediation analysis (Model 4, Hayes 2017) confirmed that the difficulty discrepancy between perspectives was mediated by decision makers' perception that the co-consumer had undisclosed preferences ($\beta = .05$, SE = .03, 95% CI: [.008, .125]).

PAIRWISE COMPARISONS OF 5 PHRASES FOR DECISION DIFFICULTY

		Perspective *Mean (SD)*		Contrast
		Decision maker	Co-consumer	
No preference phrase *Mean (SD)*	"I don't care" *M* = 4.07 (1.97)	4.43 (1.94)	3.72 (1.96)	*F(1,716)=5.14, p* = .024
	"I don't know" *M* = 4.77 (1.76)	4.94 (1.80)	4.60 (1.72)	*F(1,716)=1.15, p* = .285
	"I'll go wherever" *M* = 3.76 (1.97)	3.82 (1.99)	3.69 (1.96)	*F(1,716)=.18, p* = .675
	"Let's go where you want" *M* = 3.95 (1.90)	3.97 (1.93)	3.93 (1.88)	*F(1,716)=.02, p* = .896
	"You decide" *M* = 3.79 (1.99)	4.00 (2.05)	3.58 (1.93)	*F(1,716)=1.79, p* = .181

DEPICTION OF MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR DECISION DIFFICULTY



WEB APPENDIX STUDY 4

Building on the main Study 4 reported in the manuscript, this study again tests the impact of no preference communication compared to an explicit preference communication on the decision maker's increased decision difficulty (H2a) and decreased liking of the co-consumer (H4a). Importantly, this study also demonstrates the underlying mechanism. We predicted that the perception of undisclosed preferences would mediate the effect of no preference communication on both decision difficulty (H2b) and liking of the co-consumer (H4b).

Design, Procedure, and Measures

We recruited 397 participants (M_{age} = 39.04, 44.8% female) from "MTurk" in exchange for monetary compensation. Participants read a scenario in which they were asked to imagine making a joint decision. We asked participants to imagine they were getting dinner with a friend and were trying to decide together which restaurant to go to out of three nearby restaurants. All participants were assigned to the "decision maker" role. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of two preference communication conditions. Those in the *no preference* condition, read that their friend "told you that they have no preference among the three restaurants", while those in the *explicit preference* condition, read that their friend "told you that they have a preference for one restaurant over the others".

As our two dependent variables, we measured social utility by asking participants to rate "How much do you like this friend?" (on a 7-point scale; 1 = "not like at all", 7 = "like a lot") and decision difficulty by asking them to rate "To what extent do you think your friend made it easier for you to decide?" (on a 7-point scale; 1 = "more easy", 7 = "more difficult"). Next, as our mediator, we measured perceptions of undisclosed preferences with the same two items used in the main Study 6: "Did you think that your partner was hiding his/her true preferences from you?" (1 = "s/he was definitely not hiding their true preference", 7 = "s/he was definitely hiding their true preference") and "To what extent did you think that your partner was trying to keep their true preference from you?" (1 = "s/he was definitely not trying to keep their true preference from me", 7 = "s/he was definitely trying to keep their true preference from me"). These two items were highly correlated and were averaged to form the perception of undisclosed preferences measure (r = .86, p < .001). Finally, we included an attention check.[1]

Results

Liking of co-consumer. Supporting H4a and replicating the results of main Study 4, a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of preference communication on liking of the co-consumer ($F(1,396) = 4.33$, $p = .038$, $\eta_p^2 = .011$). Specifically, decision makers liked their partner less when they expressed no preference (M = 5.40, SD = 1.20) than when they expressed an explicit preference (M = 5.64, SD = 1.14).

Decision difficulty. Supporting H2a, a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of preference communication on decision difficulty ($F(1,396) = 44.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .102$). Decision makers who received a no preference communication experienced significantly greater

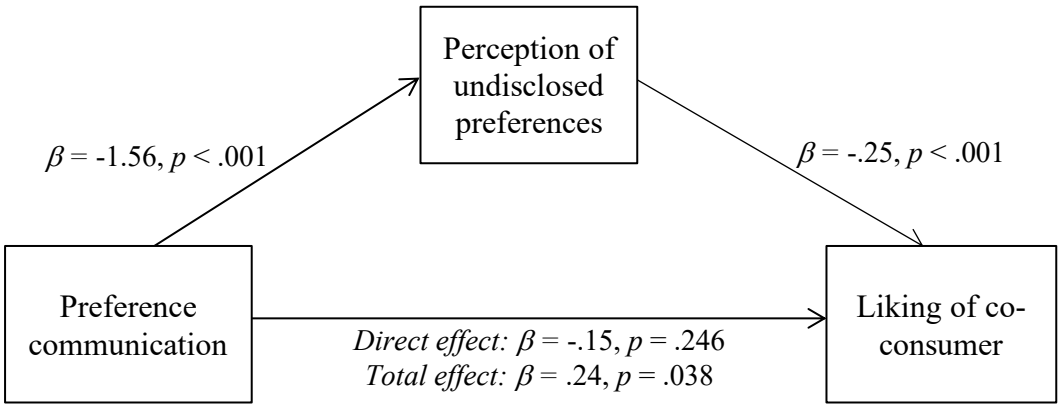
[1] All other studies reported in the main manuscript and web appendix did not include any exclusion criteria, and analyzed responses from all participants who completed the study. In this study, we included an attention check measure (i.e., "The correct answer to this question is the far-left option. Please indicate "not at all"), which was displayed alongside the measures of perception of undisclosed preferences. All analyses remain significant when excluding participants who did not pass this attention check (N = 13).

difficulty making their decision (M = 3.98, SD = 2.06) compared to decision makers who received an explicit preference communication (M = 2.70, SD = 1.74).

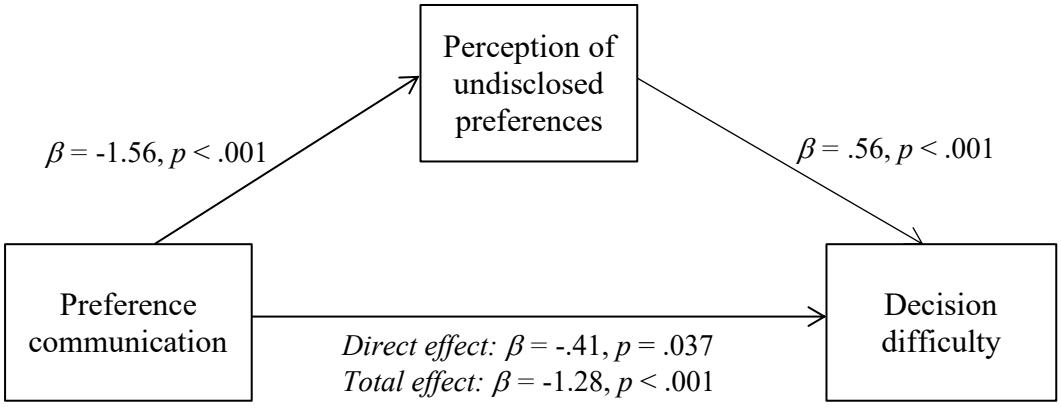
Perception of undisclosed preferences. Supporting H1, a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of preference communication on the perception of undisclosed preferences ($F(1,396) = 108.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .215$). Specifically, participants in the *no preference* condition were significantly more likely to believe that the co-consumer was hiding their preferences (M = 3.41, SD = 1.67) compared to participants in the *explicit preference* condition (M = 1.84, SD = 1.31).

Mediation analysis. To test the role of perception of undisclosed preferences as the driver of these effects, two separate bootstrap mediation analyses (Model 4, Hayes 2017) were conducted. Importantly, the perception of undisclosed preferences significantly mediated the effect of preference communication on liking of the co-consumer (β = .39, SE = .08, 95% CI: [.249, .554]), supporting H4b. Further, the perception of undisclosed preferences significantly mediated the effect of preference communication on decision difficulty (β = -.87, SE = .12, 95% CI: [-1.136, -.659]), supporting H2b.

DEPICTION OF MEDIATION ANALYSIS ON LIKING FOR CO-CONSUMER



DEPICTION OF MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR DECISION DIFFICULTY (WA STUDY 4)



WEB APPENDIX STUDY 5

The purpose of this study was to examine whether the consequences on decision makers' choices that we found in the main Study 5 are anticipated by co-consumers.

Design, Procedure, and Measures

This study recruited (non-overlapping) participants from the same pool of students as in the main Study 5 (N = 159; M_{age} = 19.80, 35.2% female). Similar to the procedure used in the main Study 5, participants were welcomed to a study about movie preferences and were asked to rank-order five different movie genres (comedy, action, drama, science-fiction, and romance) according to their preferences. Then, participants were asked to imagine choosing a movie clip to watch with someone (their partner) in the lab. All participants took the co-consumer's perspective and were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. In the *no preference* condition, participants imagined that they sent their partner the following message: "I have no preference, it's your call!". In both the *explicit similar-preference* condition and *explicit dissimilar-preference* condition, decision makers imagined that they sent their partner the following message: "I like [participant's highest-ranked option] the best, but it's your call!", where [participant's highest-ranked option] was filled in with the genre the participant indicated earlier to prefer the most.

After imagining sending the different preference communications, participants were asked to make a prediction about which movie their partner would choose for joint consumption (i.e., "Which movie do you think they would have chosen?"), out of five different movie options. Consistent with the set-up of the movie choice dependent measure used in the main Study 5, the specific genre that each participant saw was customized based on their own movie preference and their manipulated condition. For example, if a participant had indicated that their most preferred movie genre was comedy and their least preferred movie genre was action in the *explicit similar-preference* condition, they indicated which movie they expected the decision maker to have chosen from the following five options:

<Movie A>	<Movie B>	<Movie C >	<Movie D>	<Movie E>
		Strength of genre (1-5)		
Comedy: 5	Comedy: 4	Comedy: 3	Comedy: 2	Comedy: 1
Action: 1	Action: 2	Action: 3	Action: 4	Action: 5

And if a participant had indicated that their most preferred movie genre was comedy and their least preferred movie genre was action in the *explicit dissimilar-preference* condition, they indicated which movie they expected the decision maker to have chosen from the following five options:

<Movie A>	<Movie B>	<Movie C >	<Movie D>	<Movie E>
		Strength of genre (1-5)		
Action: 5	Action: 4	Action: 3	Action: 2	Action: 1
Comedy: 1	Comedy: 2	Comedy: 3	Comedy: 4	Comedy: 5

After data collection, Movie A was coded as '1', Movie B was coded as '2', Movie C was coded as '3', Movie D was coded as '4', and Movie E was coded as '5'. Thus, an answer closer to 1 indicates that the co-consumer predicted that the decision maker would have chosen a

movie closer to their most preferred topic, while an answer closer to 5 indicates that the co-consumer predicted that the decision maker would have chosen a movie closer to their least preferred topic.

Results

Predicted game choice. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant omnibus effect ($F(2,156) = 5.09$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .061$). Interestingly, co-consumers of no preference predicted that the decision makers would choose a movie that they prefer ($M = 2.25$, SD = 1.59) equally as much as those receiving an explicit similar-preference communication ($M = 2.51$, SD = 1.68; $F(1,120) = .41$, $p = .523$, $\eta_p^2 = .223$). In addition, co-consumers of no preference predicted that decision makers would choose a movie that they prefer significantly *more* ($M = 2.25$, SD = 1.59) than those receiving an explicit dissimilar-preference communication would ($M = 3.54$; SD = 1.22; $F(1,114) = 7.90$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .065$). This suggests that, similar to the misprediction in decision difficulty, co-consumers do not correctly anticipate the negative impact of expressing no preference on the decision maker's consumption utility.

WEB APPENDIX STUDY 6

This study compares the impact of no preference communication to another theoretically relevant benchmark: when the decision maker receives no communication (i.e., no information about the co-consumer is available). While simply not knowing others' preferences may trigger processes that lead to predictions of similar preferences (e.g., the false consensus effect), our work introduces how an *active* communication of no preference is different because it triggers the perception of undisclosed preferences.

Design, Procedure, and Measures

A total of 218 students at a large North American university (M_{age} = 18.76, 47.3% female) participated in the study. Similar to the procedure used in the main Study 6, participants were welcomed to a study about their preference for trivia game topics and were first asked to rank-order four different trivia game topics according to their preferences. After completing this ranking, participants were asked to imagine that they were paired with another student to play a trivia game together, and were randomly assigned to one of two preference communication conditions.

In the *no preference communication* condition, participants read a message ostensibly sent by their partner saying "Hey, I don't have a preference, it's your call!", while in the *no communication* condition, decision makers did not receive any communication from the other person. Then participants were asked to choose a trivia topic for them to play together. The choice dependent measure was identical to that of main Study 6, where a choice closer to '1' indicated an option that the participants (decision makers) most preferred, and a choice closer to '5' indicated an option that the participants (decision makers) least preferred.

After choosing a trivia topic, participants were led to believe that they played the trivia game with their virtual partner. After playing the game, participants indicated their decision difficulty by answering an item consistent with that used in the main Study 6 (i.e., "To what extent do you think s/he made it easier for you to decide?"; 1 = "a great deal easier", 7 = "not at all easier"). Finally, participants indicated their perception of undisclosed preferences across two items consistent with those used in the main Study 6: "Did you think that your task partner was hiding his/her true preferences from you?" (1 = "s/he was definitely not hiding their true preference", 7 = "s/he was definitely hiding their true preference") and "To what extent did you think that your task partner was trying to keep their true preference from you?" (1 = "s/he was definitely not trying to keep their true preference from me", 7 = "s/he was definitely trying to keep their true preference from me"). These two items were highly correlated and were averaged to form the perception of undisclosed preferences measure (r = .79, p < .001).

Results

Game choice. A one-way ANOVA of preference communication on game choice did not reach significance ($F(1,217) = .44$, $p = .507$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$). Participants in the *no preference communication* chose a game topic that they preferred (M = 1.97, SD = 1.13) as much as those chosen in the *no communication* condition (M = 2.08, SD = 1.31). We conjecture that the lack of significance may have been due to an insufficient sample size (compared to that of the main Study 6).

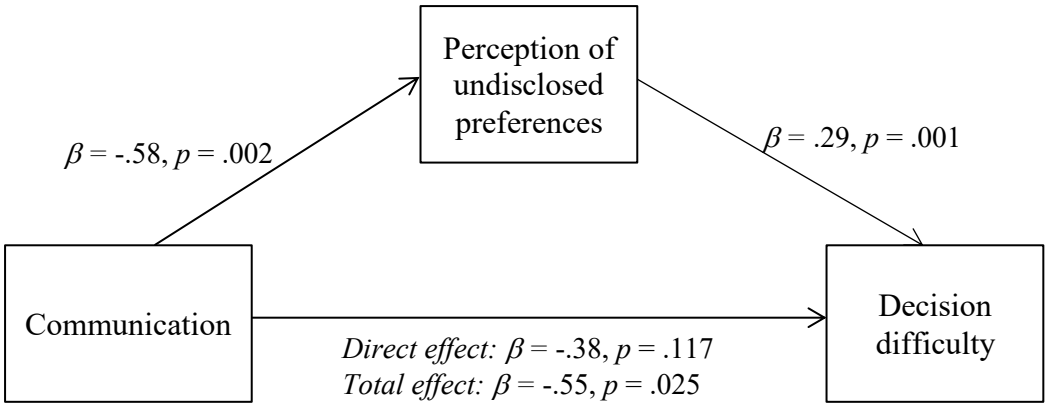
Decision difficulty. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of preference communication on decision difficulty ($F(1,217) = 5.12$, $p = .025$, $\eta_p^2 = .023$). Participants who

received a no preference communication experienced significantly greater decision difficulty (*M* = 3.58, SD = 1.91) compared to participants who received no communication (*M* = 3.03, SD = 1.66).

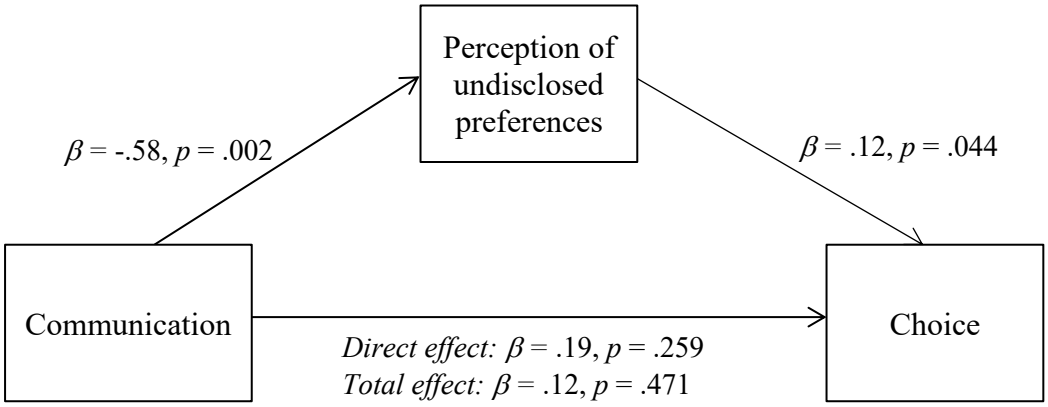
Perception of undisclosed preferences. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of preference communication on the perception of undisclosed preferences ($F(1,217) = 9.72$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .043$). Participants in the *no preference* condition were significantly more likely to believe that the co-consumer was hiding their preference (*M* = 3.87, SD = 1.51) compared to participants in the *no communication* condition (*M* = 3.28, SD = 1.23).

Mediation analyses. To test whether perception of undisclosed preferences was driving the effect on decision difficulty, a bootstrap mediation analysis (Model 4, Hayes 2017) was conducted. The perception of undisclosed preferences significantly mediated the effect of *no preference* communication (versus *no communication*) on participants' decision difficulty (β = -.09, SE = .04, 95% CI: [-.193, -.029]). In addition, we conducted an exploratory mediation analysis. While the choice dependent measure did not reach significance, we predicted that the perception of undisclosed preferences would still drive participants' choice. Indeed, the mediation analysis revealed that no preference communication increased perception of undisclosed preferences, leading decision makers to choose a less-preferred option (β = -.07, SE = .04, 95% CI: [-.174, -.011]).

DEPICTION OF MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR DECISION DIFFICULTY



DEPICTION OF MEDIATION ANALYSIS FOR CHOICE



WEB APPENDIX STUDY 7

This study explores the role of relationship closeness on the effect no preference (vs. explicit preference) communication on decision makers' decision difficulty in joint decisions.

Design, Procedure, and Measures

We recruited 550 participants (M_{age} = 23.39, 52.7% female) from a large university. Participants read a scenario in which they were asked to imagine making a joint decision of choosing a restaurant to go to with another person. The study employed a 2 (communication: no preference vs. explicit preference) × 3 (relationship closeness: new person vs. friend vs. spouse) between-subjects design. The participants took the decision maker's perspective and imagined receiving either a no preference expression or an explicit preference expression from another person with whom they are jointly deciding which restaurant to visit for dinner. The other person was described as "someone that you just met for the first time", a "friend", or a "spouse".

Next, participants rated the difficulty in making the joint decision after receiving the communication message, using three items: "To what extent do you feel they [you] were making it easier for you [the other person] to decide?", "How much more effort do you think you [the other person] would need to put into making this decision", and "To what extent do you feel they [you] were making it easier versus more difficult for you [the other person] to decide?". Each response was on a 1 to 7 scale ranging from "A great deal easier" to "Not at all easier", "No more effort" to "A lot more effort", and "A great deal easier" to "A great deal more difficult", respectively. These three items loaded together on one factor and were averaged to form our decision difficulty dependent variable (α = .85).

Results

A two-way ANOVA revealed no interaction effect ($F(5,544) = .58$, $p = .559$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$). Importantly, replicating previous studies and supporting H2a, a significant main effect of no preference communication on decision difficulty emerged ($F(1,544) = 318.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .369$): participants who received a no preference communication experienced significantly greater decision difficulty compared to participants who received an explicit preference communication, regardless of the relationship closeness with the co-consumer. In addition, a marginally significant main effect of relationship closeness emerged ($F(2,544) = 2.35$, $p = .097$, $\eta_p^2 = .009$).

PAIRWISE COMPARISONS OF CLOSENESS FOR DECISION DIFFICULTY

		Preference communication *Mean (SD)*		Contrast
		No preference	Explicit preference	
Relationship closeness	New person	5.11 (1.39)	3.10 (1.30)	$F(1,544)=98.86$, $p < .001$
	Friend	4.95 (1.72)	2.95 (1.14)	$F(1,544)=95.98$, $p < .001$
	Spouse	4.94 (1.43)	2.66 (1.19)	$F(1,544)=124.92$, $p < .001$

WEB APPENDIX STUDY 8

This study examines additional social consequences of no preference (vs. explicit preference) communication in joint decisions.

Design, Procedure, and Measures

We recruited 192 participants from MTurk (M_{age} = 36.54, 45.3% female) for this study. Participants were first asked to think about situations where "you and someone you know (e.g., a friend, a family member, colleague, etc.) need to make a joint decision" (similar to the description used in Web Appendix Study 1). Then, all participants were asked to take the perspective of a decision maker by imagining that "even though this is a joint decision, you will ultimately be the one to make the decision." Next, participants in the *no preference* condition were asked to imagine that the "other person told you that they have no preference between option A and option B." On the other hand, participants in the *explicit preference* condition imagined that the "other person told you that they prefer option A over option B."

After imagining receiving one of the two preference communications, participants first rated how annoying they would evaluate the co-consumer to be (i.e., "When the other person stated they had no preference [a specific preference], to what extent did you feel that they were being annoying?" (1 = "not at all", 7 = "to a great extent"). Then participants rated how helpful they would find the co-consumer to be (i.e., "When the other person stated they had no preference [a specific preference], to what extent did you feel that they were being helpful?" (1 = "not at all", 7 = "to a great extent").

Results

Co-consumers who expressed no preference were perceived significantly more negatively than co-consumers who expressed explicit preferences. Specifically, decision makers rated the co-consumer to be more annoying when they expressed no preference (M = 3.01, SD = 1.83) than when they expressed an explicit preference (M = 2.29, SD = 1.52; $F(1,190) = 8.88$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .045$). Moreover, the co-consumer was also rated to be less helpful when they expressed no preference (M = 3.39, SD = 1.78) than when they expressed an explicit preference (M = 4.24, SD = 1.68; $F(1,190) = 11.76$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .058$).