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Matching choices to avoid offending stigmatized group members

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ABSTRACT

People (selectors) sometimes make choices both for themselves and for others (recipients). We propose that selectors worry about offending recipients with their choices when recipients are stigmatized group members and options in a choice set differ along a stigma-relevant dimension. Accordingly, selectors are more likely to make the same choices for themselves and stigmatized group member recipients than non-stigmatized group member recipients. We conducted eight studies to study this hypothesis in different choice contexts (food, music, games, books) and with recipients from different stigmatized groups (the obese, Black-Americans, the elderly, students at lower-status schools). We use three different approaches to show that this effect is driven by people's desire to avoid offending stigmatized group members with their choices. Thus, although prior research shows that people often want to avoid being associated with dissociative groups, such as stigmatized groups, we demonstrate that people make the same choices for self and stigmatized other to minimize offense.

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Introduction

People often work and consume alongside and together with others: for instance, when collaborating on a team project, eating with colleagues during lunch, or drinking cocktails with friends at the bar. In these work and consumption situations, people commonly make choices not only for themselves but also for others (e.g., delegating tasks to oneself and team members, picking up take-out for oneself and one's work colleagues). These decisions may seem quite trivial; whether one delegates a memory-heavy or strategy-heavy task or selects a salad or a burger for one's colleague is hardly a matter of life-or-death. However, interpersonal motivations can transform a seemingly simple choice about tasks or food into more meaningful and challenging communication about identities and values (Argo, Dahl, & Manchanda, 2005; Ariely & Levav, 2000; Belk, 1979, 1988; Berger & Heath, 2007; Stayman & Deshpande, 1989). Such communication can become even more challenging when these others are members of stigmatized groups, as the potential for offending them arises.

Indeed, research has shown that in social interactions, people are concerned about offending stigmatized group members, or people who have "some attribute, or characteristic, that conveys a social identity that is devalued in some particular social context" (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Norton, Dunn, Carney, & Ariely, 2012; Snyder, Kleck, Strenta, & Mentzer, 1979). Indeed, interacting with members of stigmatized

groups has been shown to be more depleting than interacting with members of non-stigmatized groups (Johnston, 2002; Richeson & Trawalter, 2005; Richeson et al., 2003), at least in part because people are trying to regulate what they do and say more carefully to avoid offending stigmatized group members, for self-presentational motives, other-serving motives, or a combination of both motives (Devine, 1989; Devine, Evett, & Vasquez-Suson, 1996; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Monteith, Ashburn-Nardo, Voils, & Czopp, 2002; Richeson & Trawalter, 2005; Vorauer, Hunter, Main, & Roy, 2000).

The current research builds on these findings by examining how people handle situations in which they must make choices for themselves and for stigmatized others from choice sets that make stigma relevant. How will people choose when selecting items for themselves and stigmatized others? We predict that selectors will favor choosing "matching" items for themselves and a stigmatized recipient (e.g., the same foods) over doing so for themselves and a non-stigmatized recipient and that this matching effect is driven by selectors' desire to avoid offending the recipient. This prediction is seemingly in contrast to a large body of research on choices, which suggests that people tend to make choices for themselves that are different than the choices made by members of dissociative groups, of which stigmatized groups, such as the obese, are one important example (Berger & Heath, 2008; Berger & Rand, 2008; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Johnston, 2002; McFerran, Dahl, Fitzsimons, & Morales, 2010a; White & Dahl, 2006, 2007). For instance, Berger and Heath (2008) found that college students stopped wearing certain wristbands when "geeky" members of

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the dormitory next door began to wear them. Furthermore, [McFerran et al. \(2010a\)](#) examined the effect of a salient obese versus normal-weight confederate's food portion selection on a subsequent participant's portion selection and found that participants chose a larger portion after seeing a confederate select a large quantity, but that the increase in portion size was smaller when the confederate was obese rather than normal weight, indicating greater divergence from the obese confederate.

However, a critical difference between this large body of research and our research is that we examine situations in which people make choices for both themselves and a member of the stigmatized group in situations when consumption is expected to occur in the presence of the stigmatized group member ([Johnston, 2002](#); [McFerran et al., 2010a](#)). We suggest that these circumstances lead people to worry about offending stigmatized group members. These worries will be particularly influential in situations in which the choices are perceived to be relevant to the stigmatized identity ([Crocker et al., 1998](#); [Major & O'Brien, 2005](#); [Stayman & Deshpande, 1989](#)), such as when choosing status versus utilitarian products for an unemployed other, a romantic comedy versus an action adventure film for a homosexual man, or – as is the case in our studies – healthy versus unhealthy food for an overweight other, a hip-hop versus country music song for a Black-American, a memory versus luck/strategy game for an elderly person, or a book using advanced-level versus basic-level terminology for a student at a lower-status college.

Our research is related to prior findings that people align their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior in the presence of others. Research on implicit social tuning has examined circumstances that prompt people to align their beliefs and attitudes to be the same as those of others ([Lowery, Hardin, & Sinclair, 2001](#); [Lun, Sinclair, Glenn, & Whitchurch, 2007](#); [Sinclair, Huntsinger, Skorinko, & Hardin, 2005](#); [Sinclair, Lowery, Hardin, & Colangelo, 2005](#)). For instance, [Lowery et al. \(2001\)](#) found that White participants expressed less automatic prejudice when in the presence of a Black experimenter versus a White experimenter. In other words, participants implicitly changed their beliefs to align with those of the experimenter.

Our research is also related to research demonstrating that people alter their behavior in the presence of stigmatized group members to avoid having other people make negative inferences about their behavior ([Apfelbaum et al., 2008](#); [Snyder et al., 1979](#)). For instance, when interacting in a photo-identification task that allowed participants to either verbally acknowledge or not acknowledge race when identifying photos, White participants were more likely to mimic the verbal strategy used by a Black partner versus a White partner ([Apfelbaum et al., 2008](#)). In addition, when asked to choose a room in which to watch a movie (one room with someone in a regular chair, the other with someone in a wheelchair), participants chose to sit with a handicapped person over a non-handicapped person when the two rooms were showing the same movie (a situation that made participants worry about seeming discriminatory), but not when the rooms were showing different movies (a situation that gave participants an “excuse” for their choice) ([Snyder et al., 1979](#)). We build upon these prior findings by also examining social motives in situations in which we predict alignment between self and stigmatized group members. We discuss the differences between our research and this prior research in the general discussion section.

In addition to building upon the literature on choices for self, this research adds to the nascent literature on choices that people make for others (e.g., [Laran, 2010](#); [Polman, 2012](#); [Ubel, Angott, & Zikmund-Fisher, 2011](#); [Ward & Broniarczyk, 2011](#)). For instance, [Polman \(2012\)](#) found that people are less loss averse when they make choices for others, and [Laran \(2010\)](#) found that people are less concerned about balancing self-control and indulgence goals when making choices for others. We build on existing research

on choosing for others by examining situations with high social tension, in which people simultaneously choose potentially stigmatizing items for self and stigmatized or non-stigmatized recipient. We note that these common consumption situations can be especially likely to lead recipients to feel hurt because recipients can compare the choices that the selector made for self versus recipient and observe similarities or differences on the potentially stigmatizing dimension.

To illustrate, imagine that someone is responsible for choosing meals for himself and a recipient from a menu with healthy items like salads and unhealthy items like burgers. If the selector chooses a healthy item for himself and an unhealthy item for the recipient, he may worry that an overweight recipient would feel hurt and think: “Why did my friend get me a burger and get himself the salad? It must be because I'm fat.” Alternatively, if the selector chose an unhealthy item for himself and a healthy item for the recipient, he might worry that the overweight recipient would feel hurt and think: “Why did my friend get me a salad and himself a burger? It must be because I need to lose weight.” We suggest that when the choice options differ on a stigma-relevant dimension, people seek to avoid choosing different options for themselves and stigmatized group members because they worry it may hurt these recipients. Thus, they pursue a “matching” choice strategy, making choices that match on any potentially stigmatizing dimensions (e.g., unhealthy burger for both self and other, or healthy salad for both self and other). That is, we suggest that selectors will favor choosing “matching” items for themselves and a stigmatized recipient and that this matching effect is driven by selectors' desire to avoid hurting the recipient. One could argue that choosing matching items could also hurt the recipient when the choice options differ along a stigma-relevant dimension (e.g., that choosing two unhealthy items could feel patronizing or that choosing two healthy items could imply that the recipient should lose weight and learn a lesson about eating healthy). However, we show empirically in Study 2 that this potential for hurting that could come from choosing matching items does not come to mind as much as the potential for hurting that people think can result from choosing non-matching items.

The present research

The present research tests the novel hypothesis that people will be more likely to engage in a matching strategy—to make the same choice for themselves and another person—when the other person is a member of a stigmatized social group (versus a non-stigmatized social group). We further hypothesize that the use of this matching strategy is driven by people's desire to avoid hurting members of stigmatized groups. In eight studies, we test these hypotheses in the context of choices that people make for themselves and for stigmatized versus non-stigmatized others. In Studies 1a–1e, we conduct a first test of our matching hypothesis, examining whether people are more likely to choose matching products for themselves and a stigmatized (versus non-stigmatized) group member recipient across several different choice domains and stigmatized groups. Study 1a looks at food choices for self and overweight/obese recipient; Study 1b looks at hypothetical food choices for self and overweight/obese recipient; Study 1c looks at music choices for self and Black-American recipient; Study 1d looks at game choices for self and elderly recipient; and Study 1e looks at book choices for self and lower-status college student recipient.

In Studies 2–4, we focus on one choice domain and one stigmatized group (food choices and the overweight/obese) and seek to replicate the matching effect while exploring potential mechanisms underlying this effect. These studies test our second

hypothesis that the matching effect is driven by people's desire to avoid hurting stigmatized group members. Study 2 examines people's lay theories about whether choosing non-matching (different healthiness) foods versus matching foods for self and recipient will lead a recipient to feel more negative depending upon whether the recipient is overweight or normal weight. Study 3 further tests our account by examining how choices are affected when the choice set options differ on the stigma-relevant dimension of healthiness; we hypothesize that increased matching with stigmatized group members should only occur when the non-matching options have the potential to offend (i.e., when the options differ in healthiness). Finally, in Study 4, we use a moderated mediation analysis to more precisely test our proposed process, examining whether people select matching choices to avoid making an overweight recipient feel negative about her weight.

In sum, we test the generalizability of our framework by investigating our hypotheses with choices for several different stigmatized groups (the obese, Black-Americans, the elderly, and students at lower-status schools) and using choice sets in several product domains (food, music, games, books). We then examine the process underlying this effect, focusing on choices for the obese and choice sets consisting of food, as this is a very common choice experience.¹

Study 1a: Matching actual choices for oneself and a stigmatized group member (an overweight/obese person)

Study 1a tested our hypothesis that people are more likely to make matching choices for themselves and a stigmatized group member than for themselves and a non-stigmatized group member by examining participants' food choices for themselves and either an overweight/obese or normal-weight recipient. Being overweight or obese is generally considered to be undesirable (Garner, 1997; Vartanian, 2010) and is strongly stigmatized in many Western societies, including the United States (Agerström & Rooth, 2011; Allon, 1982; Garner, 1997; Pingitore, Dugoni, Tindale, & Spring, 1994; Puhl & Brownell, 2001, 2003; Roehling, 1999). Accordingly, we predicted that participants would be more likely to make matching food choices for themselves and an overweight recipient than for themselves and a normal-weight recipient, due to an interpersonal motive to avoid offending a stigmatized group member.

Method

Participants and design

Participants ($N = 67$; 50.7% female) were undergraduate students from a private university in the southeastern United States who were paid for their participation in this study. This study had a two-group (recipient's weight: overweight, normal weight) between-subjects design. Nine additional participants were excluded from analysis for the following reasons: four participants were excluded because they did not choose snacks due to lack of hunger, food allergies, or experimental error; two participants were excluded because they selected multiple snacks for the confederate; two participants were excluded because they personally

knew the confederate; and one participant was excluded for expressing suspicion about the study.

Procedure

Participants were run one at a time. When a participant entered the lab, the experimenter brought her to a room where a White female confederate, ostensibly another participant, was already sitting at a computer station taking a survey. In the overweight recipient's weight condition, the confederate was wearing a body prosthetic that dramatically increased her size, and in the normal-weight recipient's weight condition, the confederate was not wearing a body prosthetic (see Fig. 1a for photos of the confederate with and without the body prosthetic). This body prosthetic was custom-designed by an Academy Award-winning costume studio for a confederate in previous research (McFerran, Dahl, Fitzsimons, & Morales, 2010b; McFerran et al., 2010a). The confederate, a White female, had a natural height of 5 feet 3.5 inches (161.3 centimeters) and weighed 116 pounds (52.6 kilograms), with a body mass index (BMI) of 20.2 (on the low end of normal weight, according to standard BMI cut-offs), and wore a size 0–2. With the body prosthetic on, she appeared to weigh approximately 180 pounds (81.6 kilograms, approximate BMI of 31.4) and wore a size 16. According to standard BMI cut-offs, a BMI of 31.4 technically makes the confederate obese.

The experimenter explained to the participant that this was a two-part study in which participants would first fill out a questionnaire on the computer, including questions about television preferences, and then watch a television clip in the room next door with the other participant. The experimenter gestured to the confederate as the other participant. Importantly, the experimenter told the participant that, to replicate environments in which people watch this type of television show, we were providing wheat crackers and chocolate chip cookies for participants to eat during the show. Each participant was shown that on a side table, there was an array of three bags of wheat crackers and three bags of chocolate chip cookies, pre-packaged in Ziploc bags to conceal their brands. Each participant was told that upon finishing the computer survey, she should take a snack and enter the adjacent room. Each participant was also told that if the other participant (i.e., the confederate) finished before her, she should wait for the other participant (i.e., the confederate) to come in so that they could watch the television clip together and afterwards, talk about it, and fill out a brief reaction survey. This part of the procedure provided a reason for the participant and confederate to be in

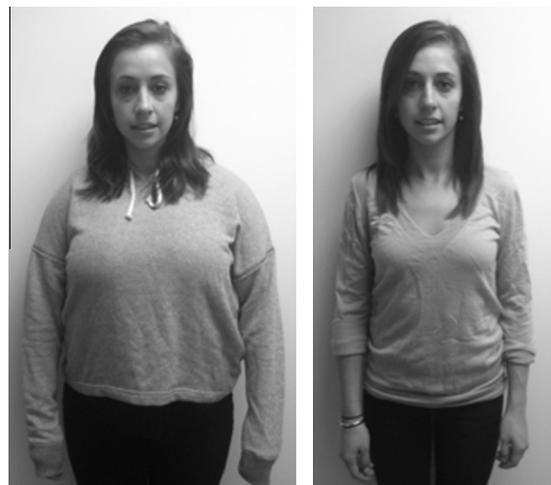


Fig. 1a. The White female confederate with the body prosthesis and without the body prosthesis (Study 1a).

¹ We surveyed 298 Americans in an online panel. The majority (74.2%) said they had ordered or selected food for another person. Of these 221 people, 57.5% said they had been in the situation of ordering or selecting food for an overweight or obese person. Many of these situations occurred in the workplace: 114 (38.3%) people said they had ordered or selected food for a co-worker, and of these 114 people, 48.2% said they had been in the situation of ordering or selecting food for an overweight or obese co-worker. Overall, making food choices for an overweight or obese person is a common choice experience.

separate rooms when the participant was asked to choose two snacks for herself and the confederate.

Participants then started the computer survey, which contained filler questions unrelated to the study and demographic questions. About one minute into each participant's survey, the confederate "finished" the survey and walked to the room next door. When participants finished a few minutes later, the experimenter told them that the other participant (i.e., the confederate) forgot to grab a snack. Accordingly, the participant was told that she should pick a snack for herself and a snack for the other participant and head over to the television clip room. The experimenter then feigned being busy, so that participants would not try to engage the experimenter in conversation about the food choices. Each participant then chose a snack for herself and for the confederate and walked into the other room. Of note, given the two options of wheat crackers and cookies, four sets of selections were possible: (1) cookies for oneself and cookies for the recipient, (2) wheat crackers for oneself and wheat crackers for the recipient, (3) cookies for oneself and wheat crackers for the recipient, and (4) wheat crackers for oneself and cookies for the recipient. The first two order sets follow what we term a "matching" strategy: the choice for the self matches the choice for the recipient. The second two order sets follow what we term a "non-matching" strategy: the choice for the self does not match the choice for the recipient.

After the participant had given the confederate a snack, the experimenter entered the television clip room and told the participant that the study was complete. The experimenter then asked if the participant had any questions or comments or found anything strange about the study, and finally, the experimenter debriefed the participant.

In this study and in all subsequent studies that assessed matching with an overweight versus normal-weight recipient, participants self-reported their height and weight, which we used to calculate their BMI. Including participant's BMI as a covariate does not affect any of our results, nor does including BMI as a continuous variable in moderator analyses affect any of our results.² Therefore, participant's BMI will not be further discussed in subsequent studies. We discuss BMI and the lack of moderation in the general discussion section.

Results and discussion

Matching

A logistic regression was performed on the key dependent variable of matching, coded as one if participants selected the same snacks for themselves and the recipient (i.e., the confederate) and zero if participants selected different snacks for themselves and the recipient. The recipient's weight status was coded as a dummy variable equal to one if the recipient was overweight and zero if the recipient was normal weight.

We found that the effect of recipient's weight on matching was significant ($B = 1.23$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 5.59$, $p = .018$). Specifically, participants were significantly more likely to choose matched snacks

for the recipient and for themselves when the recipient was overweight (59.5%) than when the recipient was normal weight (30.0%). The breakdown of the snack choices by condition was as follows—when the recipient was overweight, 29.7% chose cookies for both self and recipient, 29.7% chose wheat crackers for both self and recipient, 24.3% chose cookies for self and wheat crackers for recipient, and 16.2% chose wheat crackers for self and cookies for recipient; when the recipient was normal weight, 23.3% chose cookies for both self and recipient, 6.7% chose wheat crackers for both self and recipient, 20.0% chose cookies for self and wheat crackers for recipient, and 50.0% chose wheat crackers for self and cookies for recipient.

Thus, Study 1a provided initial evidence that people would make more matching choices for themselves and a member of a stigmatized group.

Study 1b: Matching hypothetical choices for oneself and a stigmatized group member (an overweight/obese person)

Study 1a demonstrated that the predicted matching effect occurred with actual choices in an actual social interaction and when the other person in the interaction was someone they did not personally know. In Study 1b, we sought to replicate the effect of Study 1a with a hypothetical choice design. Study 1b also increased the generalizability of this finding by using an Asian (versus White) female confederate and testing whether this matching effect would occur with someone described as a friend rather than someone who was a newly acquainted person (i.e., the confederate).

Method

Participants and design

Participants on Amazon Mechanical Turk ($N = 223$; 57.0% female), an online panel, were randomly assigned to conditions in a two-group (recipient's weight: overweight or normal weight) between-subjects design.

Procedure

Participants were told that they were participating in a study on "Choices" and that they would make a series of choices for other people. First, to enhance this cover story, all participants saw a photo of a normal-weight White male and made a t-shirt choice for this person. Then, participants made a side dish choice for an Asian female who was either overweight or normal weight in the

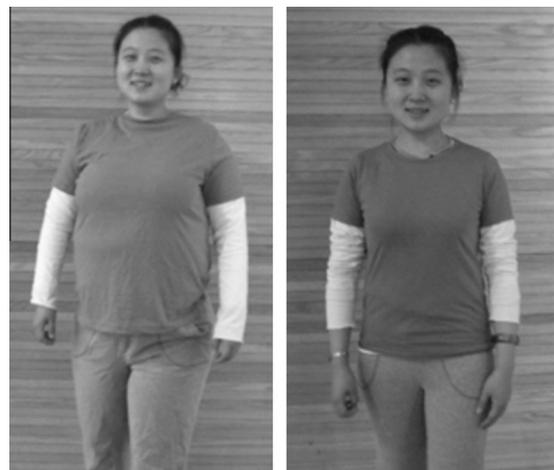


Fig. 1b. The Asian female confederate with the body prosthesis and without the body prosthesis (Study 1b).

² We note that it is possible to consider a moderating role for BMI using a cut-off value such as separating participants into obese ($BMI \geq 30$) versus non-obese ($BMI < 30$). We examined this possibility across Studies 1b, 2, and 4. We were not able to conduct this analysis in Study 1a because only three participants were obese, and we were not able to conduct this analysis in Study 3, because one of the cells in the $2 \times 2 \times 2$ design had zero error variance due to all participants choosing to match. In Studies 1b and 2, treating BMI as a categorical variable did not lead to moderation of any of our results. In Study 4, there was a significant interaction between condition and categorical BMI ($p = .047$), such that non-obese participants were more likely to select matching options with an overweight recipient (79.3%) than a normal-weight recipient (54.9%), whereas obese participants were equally likely to select matching options with an overweight recipient (73.2%) and a normal-weight recipient (67.2%). Overall, findings strongly suggest that participants' own BMI did not play a significant role in our effects. We discuss this in the general discussion section.

photo (see Fig. 1b for the actual photos used in this study and Studies 2–4). The same Asian female confederate was shown in both photos, except that in the overweight condition, she wore a body prosthesis. This confederate had a natural height of 5 feet 2 inches (157.5 centimeters) and weighed 108 pounds (49.0 kilograms) with a body mass index (BMI) of 19.8 (on the low end of normal weight, according to standard BMI cut-offs) and wore a size 00–0. With the body prosthetic on, she appeared to weigh approximately 180 pounds (81.6 kilograms, approximate BMI of 32.9) and wore a size 16. According to standard BMI cut-offs, a BMI of 32.9 technically makes the confederate obese. In both photos, she wore identical clothes tailored to fit her natural small size and her larger size when wearing the body prosthetic (McFerran et al., 2010a).

Participants were told to imagine that they had agreed to pick up a take-out dinner and that their friend—the photographed confederate—had told them what she wanted for her entrée but not what she wanted for her side dish. When they got to the restaurant, there were two side dishes available: fries and a side salad. Participants then made a side dish choice (fries or side salad) for either the overweight or normal-weight recipient, followed by a side dish choice (fries or side salad) for themselves. Finally, we collected demographic information.

Results and discussion

Matching

A logistic regression was performed on the dependent variable of matching, coded as one for participants who chose the same side dishes for themselves and the recipient (i.e., fries for self and fries for recipient or salad for self and salad for recipient) and zero for participants who chose different side dishes for themselves and the recipient (i.e., fries for self and salad for recipient or salad for self and fries for recipient). The recipient's weight status was coded as a dummy variable equal to one if the recipient was overweight and zero if the recipient was normal weight.

As expected, the logistic regression revealed a significant effect of recipient's weight status ($B = .68$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 5.86$, $p = .015$). Specifically, when the recipient was overweight, participants were significantly more likely to make matching choices for the recipient and for themselves (70.3%) than when the recipient was normal weight (54.5%). The breakdown of the side dish choices by condition was as follows—when the recipient was overweight, 37.8% chose fries for both self and recipient, 32.4% chose salad for both self and recipient, 17.1% chose fries for self and salad for recipient, and 12.6% chose salad for self and fries for recipient; when the recipient was normal weight, 24.1% chose fries for both self and recipient, 30.4% chose salad for both self and recipient, 35.7% chose fries for self and salad for recipient, and 9.8% chose salad for self and fries for recipient.

Therefore, Study 1b demonstrated that the use of a matching strategy also happens with hypothetical choices when the recipient is described as a friend rather than being an acquaintance. Study 1b also demonstrated the generalizability of the results with a different confederate, who was of a different race than the Study 1a confederate. Thus, both Studies 1a and 1b provided evidence that people would make more matching choices for themselves and a member of a stigmatized group.

Study 1c: Matching hypothetical choices for oneself and a stigmatized group member (a Black-American)

Studies 1a and 1b demonstrated that the predicted matching effect occurred with food choices and the stigmatized group of the obese. However, we expect our theory to extend to other choices

and other stigmatized groups. Therefore, in Study 1c, we tested the generalizability of these results with another stigmatized group—Black-Americans (Norton et al., 2012). We operationalized stigma relevance in the choice domain of music by varying the racial stereotypicality of the music. Because (in the current cultural climate) hip hop music tends to be associated with Black-American culture, and country music tends to be associated with White-American culture, we assumed that participants would worry about the potential for offending a Black-American recipient by choosing non-matching music for self and recipient. Thus, we predicted that when the choice set options differ along a stigma-relevant dimension of racial stereotypicality, people would be more likely to make matching choices for themselves and a Black-American than for themselves and a White-American.

Method

Participants and design

Participants on Amazon Mechanical Turk ($N = 101$; 32.7% female), an online panel, were randomly assigned to conditions in a two-group (recipient's race: Black, White) between-subjects design. The majority of participants (75.2%) in this study were White, and only a few participants (3.0%) were Black. Thus, we were unable to test whether the effects were moderated by participant's race. However, the results reported below remain significant when excluding Black participants from the sample or when excluding all non-White participants from the sample.

Procedure

Participants were told that they were participating in a study on "Choices and Opinions" and that they would answer some questions about choices they might have in the real world. Participants were told that they would make a song choice for themselves and a song choice for someone named "Michael." They were shown a photo of Michael, who was either a Black male or a White male, depending upon condition (photos available from the authors).

Participants were told to imagine that they and Michael were both participating in a music player testing study, in which they would each listen to one song on headphones and then fill out a questionnaire. They were told that they could only listen to that one song while testing the music player, but that after the questionnaire was finished, they could choose to listen to either the song they selected for themselves or the song they selected for Michael. Because people value choice variety (McAlister & Pessemier, 1982; Simonson, 1990) and the ability to keep their choice options open (Gilbert & Ebert, 2002; Shin & Ariely, 2004), participants should generally prefer selecting non-matching songs to keep open the option of listening to both songs after the questionnaire was finished. If participants choose matching songs more with a stigmatized group member, this finding would suggest that participants are willing to take on a small cost to avoid hurting a stigmatized group member. Participants were told to imagine that Michael had not arrived yet, so they would have to select a song for themselves and a song for Michael to listen to, and that when Michael arrived at the study, they would need to tell Michael which song they had selected for themselves and which song they had selected for him. The two songs to select from were a hip-hop song ("Empire State of Mind" by Jay-Z ft. Alicia Keys) and a country song ("All Summer Long" by Kid Rock), which differ along the stigma-relevant dimension of racial stereotypicality. Finally, we collected demographic information.

Results and discussion

Matching

A logistic regression was performed on the dependent variable of matching, coded as one for participants who said they would tell the recipient that they chose the same song for themselves and him and zero for participants who said they would tell the recipient that they chose different songs for themselves and him. The recipient's race was coded as a dummy variable equal to one if the recipient was Black and zero if the recipient was White.

As expected, the logistic regression revealed a significant effect of recipient's race ($B = 1.64$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 14.17$, $p < .001$). Specifically, when the recipient was Black, participants were significantly more likely to say that they would tell the recipient they chose the same songs for themselves and the recipient (75.0%) than when the recipient was White (36.7%). The breakdown of the song choices by condition was as follows—when the recipient was Black, 63.5% chose “Empire State of Mind” for both self and recipient, 11.5% chose “All Summer Long” for both self and recipient, 11.5% chose “Empire State of Mind” for self and “All Summer Long” for recipient, and 13.5% chose “All Summer Long” for self and “Empire State of Mind” for recipient; when the recipient was White, 20.4% chose “Empire State of Mind” for both self and recipient, 16.3% chose “All Summer Long” for both self and recipient, 44.9% chose “Empire State of Mind” for self and “All Summer Long” for recipient, and 18.4% chose “All Summer Long” for self and “Empire State of Mind” for recipient.

Therefore, Study 1c demonstrated that the use of a matching strategy also happens with stigma-relevant choices with a different stigmatized group besides the obese, indicating the generalizability of our results. Although the matching pattern found in Study 1c could also be explained by participants preferring hip-hop music and choosing music for recipients that they believe recipients will prefer (i.e., hip-hop music for Black recipients, country music for White recipients), this alternative explanation does not apply across all studies, including Studies 1d and 1e.

Study 1d: Matching hypothetical choices for oneself and a stigmatized group member (an elderly person)

In Study 1d, we further tested the generalizability of these results with another stigmatized group—the elderly (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002; Tepper, 1994; Zebrowitz & Montepare, 2000). We chose to operationalize stigma-relevant choice for this group by varying whether a game tested individuals' ability to remember information. Because the elderly are stereotyped as vulnerable to memory problems (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002; Erber, 1989; Erber, Szuchman, & Rothberg, 1990), we assumed that participants would worry about the potential for offending an elderly recipient by making non-matching choices when memory was relevant. Thus, we predicted that when the choice set options differ along a stigma-relevant dimension of whether significant amounts of memory are required or not, people will be more likely to make matching choices for themselves and an elderly person than for themselves and a young person.

Method

Participants and design

Participants from an online panel managed by a private university ($N = 105$; 61.9% female) completed this online study in exchange for a chance at winning a gift certificate. Participants were randomly assigned to one condition in a two-group (recipient's age: elderly, young) between-subjects design. The average

age of participants was 38.33 ($SD = 14.08$), and 75% of participants were less than or equal to 49 years old (i.e., the 75th percentile). There was no main effect of participant's age on matching, nor was participant's age found to moderate the effect of recipient's age on matching. Additionally, including participant's age as a covariate did not change the significance of our effects.

Procedure

Participants were told that they were participating in a study on product choices and opinions and that they would first make a game choice for themselves and a game choice for someone named “Michael.” They were shown a photo of Michael, who was either an elderly White male or a young adult White male, depending upon condition (photos available from the authors).

Participants were told to imagine that they and Michael were both participating in a game testing study, in which they would each play one game alone and then fill out a questionnaire about the game they played. They were told that they could play one game during the game testing study, but that after the questionnaire was finished, they could choose to play either the game they selected for themselves or the game they selected for Michael. As in Study 1c, participants should generally prefer selecting non-matching games to keep open the option of playing both games after the questionnaire was finished. If participants choose matching games more with elderly Michael, this finding would suggest that participants are willing to incur a small cost to avoid hurting him. Finally, they were told to imagine that Michael had not arrived yet, so they would have to select a game for themselves and a game for Michael to play, and that when Michael arrived at the study, they would need to tell Michael which game they had selected for themselves and which game they had selected for him. The two games to select from were Yahtzee (a luck and strategy game involving rolling dice to make certain scoring combinations) and Simon (a memory game involving accurately remembering and reproducing the order in which colored buttons light up). The games were described to participants, to ensure they recognized that the games differed along the stigma-relevant dimension of how much they involve memory. Finally, participants provided demographic information.

Results and discussion

Matching

A logistic regression was performed on the dependent variable of matching, coded as one for participants who said they would tell the recipient (Michael) that they chose the same game for themselves and him and zero for participants who said they would tell the recipient that they chose different games for themselves and him. The recipient's age was coded as a dummy variable equal to one if the recipient was elderly and zero if the recipient was a young adult.

As expected, the logistic regression revealed a significant effect of the recipient's age ($B = 1.01$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 6.10$, $p = .013$). Specifically, when the recipient was elderly, participants were significantly more likely to say that they would tell the recipient they chose the same game for themselves and the recipient (66.7%) than when the recipient was a young adult (42.2%). The breakdown of the game choices by condition was as follows—when the recipient was elderly, 46.7% chose Yahtzee for both self and recipient, 20.0% chose Simon for both self and recipient, 11.7% chose Yahtzee for self and Simon for recipient, and 21.7% chose Simon for self and Yahtzee for recipient; when the recipient was a young adult, 15.6% chose Yahtzee for both self and recipient, 26.7% chose Simon for both self and recipient, 26.7% chose Yahtzee for self and Simon for recipient, and 31.1% chose Simon for self and Yahtzee for recipient.

Therefore, Study 1d further demonstrated the generalizability of our model by showing that a matching strategy also happens with stigma-relevant choices with the elderly.

Study 1e: Matching hypothetical choices for oneself and a stigmatized group member (a student at a lower-status school)

Studies 1a–1d demonstrated that the predicted matching effect occurred with a variety of choices and stigmatized groups. We also expect our theory to generalize to situations in which the other person is not a member of a traditionally stigmatized group but is stigmatized due to his or her relative lack of status on a valued dimension. Therefore, in Study 1e, we tested the generalizability of these results with product choices that top university students make for themselves and either another top university student or a local community college student. We chose to operationalize stigma-relevant choice for this group by varying whether a book's title implied low intelligence. Although community college students are not members of a stigmatized group in society at large, this group is stereotyped as being lower in intelligence in relative comparison with students at a top university (Jost, Pelham, & Carvalho, 2002). Therefore, we assumed that participants would worry about the potential for offending a community college student by making non-matching choices when intelligence was relevant. We thus predicted that when the choice set options differ along the stigma-relevant dimension of implied intelligence, top university students would be more likely to make matching choices for themselves and a community college student than for themselves and another top university student.

Method

Participants and design

Participants ($N = 151$; 46.4% female) were passers-by, primarily undergraduate students, in a student union at a private top university in the southeastern United States who were paid for their participation in this study. This study had a two-group (recipient's college: community college, top university) between-subjects design.

Procedure

Participants were told that they were participating in a study on "Product Choices." Participants were told to imagine being in their freshman year at their university and trying to figure out their college major. Participants were told to imagine discussing this with a friend of theirs from high school, who was currently attending either another top university or a community college, depending upon condition. They were told to imagine that they would go to the bookstore and pick up two college major guides, one for themselves to keep and one for their friend to keep. Participants were told that they could choose to read both the book they selected for themselves and the book they selected for their friend while at home for spring break but that they would keep the book they selected for themselves. As in Studies 1c and 1d, participants should generally prefer selecting non-matching books to keep open the option of reading both books during spring break. If participants choose matching books more with a stigmatized group member, this finding would suggest that participants are willing to take on a small cost to avoid hurting a stigmatized group member. Finally, participants selected one book for themselves and one book for their friend. The two books to select from were "The College Major's Handbook" and "The Complete Idiot's Guide: Choosing a College Major," which differ along the stigma-relevant dimension

of implied intelligence. Finally, we collected demographic information.

Results and discussion

Matching

A logistic regression was performed on the dependent variable of matching, coded as one for participants who chose the same book for themselves and the recipient and zero for participants who chose different books for themselves and the recipient. The recipient's college was coded as a dummy variable equal to one if the recipient was attending community college and zero if the recipient was attending another top university.

As expected, the logistic regression revealed a significant main effect of recipient's college ($B = .69$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 4.04$, $p = .044$). Specifically, when the recipient was a community college student, participants were significantly more likely to select the same books for themselves and the recipient (46.2%) than when the recipient was another top university student (30.1%). The breakdown of the book choices by condition was as follows—when the recipient was a community college student, 38.5% chose "The College Major's Handbook" for both self and recipient, 7.7% chose "The Complete Idiot's Guide: Choosing a College Major" for both self and recipient, 39.7% chose "The College Major's Handbook" for self and "The Complete Idiot's Guide: Choosing a College Major" for recipient, and 14.1% chose "The Complete Idiot's Guide: Choosing a College Major" for self and "The College Major's Handbook" for recipient; when the recipient was another top university student, 27.4% chose "The College Major's Handbook" for both self and recipient, 2.7% chose "The Complete Idiot's Guide: Choosing a College Major" for both self and recipient, 46.6% chose "The College Major's Handbook" for self and "The Complete Idiot's Guide: Choosing a College Major" for recipient, and 23.3% chose "The Complete Idiot's Guide: Choosing a College Major" for self and "The College Major's Handbook" for recipient.

Therefore, Study 1e further demonstrated the generalizability of our model by showing that a matching strategy also happens when people make choices for themselves and a member of a lower-status group—community college students, who are not members of a stigmatized group in society at large, but who, in comparison with students at a prestigious university, are stereotyped as being lower in intelligence (Jost et al., 2002).

Study 2: Lay theory that selecting non-matching choices for oneself and a stigmatized group member makes a stigmatized group member feel more negative

Across five replications with different choice sets and different stigmatized groups, we found consistent evidence in Studies 1a–1e that participants engaged in a matching strategy when making choices for themselves and a member of a stigmatized group. Why did participants engage in this matching strategy? We suggest that people feel an increased sense of concern about hurting members of stigmatized groups when the chosen options differ on a stigma-relevant dimension.

The next three studies use the paradigm of choosing food for self and an obese versus normal-weight recipient to examine this potential mechanism using three different approaches. Study 2 directly tested people's lay theories about the use of matching strategies when making choices for themselves and stigmatized versus non-stigmatized group members. Specifically, we examined participants' lay theories about how an overweight versus normal-weight recipient would feel if the selector made matching choices (the same unhealthy or healthy option for both people) versus non-

matching choices (healthy option for one person and unhealthy option for the other). We predicted that people would think that choosing non-matching foods for oneself and a recipient would hurt the feelings of a recipient if she were overweight, but not if she were normal weight.

Method

Participants and design

Participants from an online panel managed by a private university ($N = 278$; 63.4% female³) completed this online study in exchange for a chance at winning a gift certificate. The study had a between-subjects design with two independent variables: recipient's weight (two levels: overweight, normal weight) and food order combination (four levels: fries/fries, salad/salad, fries/salad, and salad/fries).

Procedure

All participants were told to imagine that they were going to dinner with a friend (Sarah), who was depicted with a photo of a confederate either wearing a body prosthetic or not wearing a body prosthetic, depending upon whether they were assigned to the overweight recipient condition or the normal-weight recipient condition (see Fig. 1b). Participants were told to imagine that they had agreed to pick up take-out for dinner and that their friend, Sarah, had told them what she wanted for her entrée but not what she wanted for her side dish. Participants were told to imagine that when they got to the restaurant, there were two side dishes available: fries and a side salad. As with Study 1b, there were four possible orders: two orders fit a matching strategy (fries for oneself and fries for the recipient; salad for oneself and salad for the recipient), and two orders fit a non-matching strategy (fries for oneself and salad for the recipient; salad for oneself and fries for the recipient).

Participants were then asked to rate how they thought one of the food order combinations, depending upon their randomly assigned food order condition, would affect their friend's feelings about her weight ($-3 =$ Sarah would feel negative about her weight to $+3 =$ Sarah would feel positive about her weight).

Results and discussion

A 2 (recipient's weight: overweight, normal weight) \times 4 (food order combination: fries/fries, salad/salad, fries/salad, and salad/fries) between-subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the dependent variable of feelings. There was a significant main effect of recipient's weight, $F(1,270) = 18.36$, $p < .001$, and a significant main effect of food order combination, $F(3,270) = 10.32$, $p < .001$. Importantly, there was a significant interaction between recipient's weight and food order combination, $F(3,270) = 4.14$, $p = .007$, indicating that the effect of food order combination would differ depending upon whether the recipient was overweight versus normal weight. See Fig. 2.

To decompose this significant interaction, we conducted follow-up simple effects tests to examine the effect of food order combination separately for a normal-weight recipient and an overweight recipient. As predicted, when the recipient was normal weight, there was no significant effect of food order combination on feelings, $F(3,270) = 1.06$, $p = .367$, indicating that people thought a normal-weight recipient would feel roughly the same regardless of the food order combination selected. In addition, the mean ratings were all close to zero, indicating that participants thought a nor-

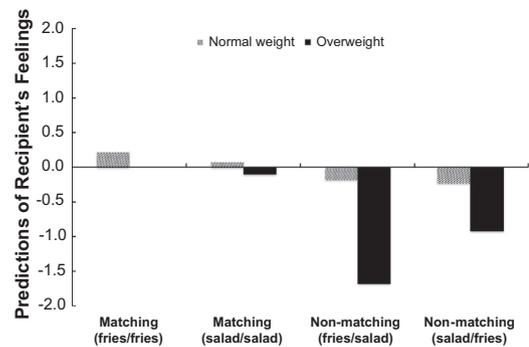


Fig. 2. Lay theories about recipient's feelings as a function of recipient's weight and food orders (self/recipient) (Study 2).

mal-weight recipient would not have her feelings hurt by any of the food order combinations. On the other hand, when the recipient was overweight, there was a significant effect of food order combination on feelings, $F(3,270) = 13.43$, $p < .001$, indicating that people thought an overweight recipient would feel differently depending upon the food order combination selected.

To decompose this significant simple main effect of food order combinations for an overweight recipient, we examined whether participants thought the two matching food order combinations differed in their effect on recipient's feelings and whether participants thought the two non-matching food order combinations differed in their effect on recipient's feelings. Participants did not think the two matching food order combinations differed in their effect on feelings, $F(1,270) = .12$, $p = .735$. In addition, both mean ratings were close to zero, indicating that participants thought an overweight recipient would not have her feelings hurt by any of the two matching food order combinations. Participants did think that the two non-matching food order combinations differed in their effect on feelings, $F(1,270) = 6.49$, $p = .011$, such that choosing fries for self and salad for overweight recipient was perceived as leading the recipient to feel more negative than choosing salad for self and fries for overweight recipient ($M = -1.68$ versus $M = -.92$).

Because the two matching orders were thought to lead to a similar effect on feelings of an overweight recipient, we combined the two matching orders and conducted a planned contrast comparing the effect of the two matching orders to the effect of each of the non-matching orders separately. As predicted, participants thought that the matching orders would lead to significantly less negative feelings compared to the non-matching order composed of choosing fries for self and salad for overweight recipient, $F(1,270) = 38.47$, $p < .001$, and compared to the non-matching order composed of choosing salad for self and fries for overweight recipient, $F(1,270) = 11.33$, $p = .001$.

Thus, participants' beliefs about how recipients would feel based upon participants' choices were in line with our hypotheses: When making choices for themselves and stigmatized others, participants thought that normal-weight recipients' feelings would not be affected by which food order combination was selected, whereas participants thought that overweight recipients would feel more negative about themselves if non-matching food order combinations were selected than if matching food order combinations were selected.

Study 3: Increased matching with a stigmatized group member is conditional on whether the choice set options differ on a stigma-relevant dimension

Study 2 examined people's lay theories as one way to examine the possible mechanism underlying the basic matching effect

³ Demographic data, including gender, were inadvertently not collected for the first 136 participants.

found in the food domain with the overweight/obese, in which people made matching food choices more when the recipient was overweight. Study 3 tests the proposed process in a different way by examining a potential moderating effect. In particular, Study 3 varies whether the choice set contains options that differ along a stigma-relevant dimension and tests the hypothesis that participants will only engage in more matching when the choice set contains options that differ along a stigma-relevant dimension. To examine this idea, we varied whether the choices varied in healthiness (fries versus salad) or did not vary in healthiness (fries versus onion rings). We suggest that matching will occur more often when the choice set contains options that differ on the stigma-relevant dimension, because in this situation, people may worry that an overweight recipient could feel offended by non-matching choices.

Method

Participants and design

Participants from an online panel managed by a private university ($N = 118$; 67.8% female) completed this study in exchange for a chance at winning a gift certificate. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (recipient's weight: overweight, normal weight) \times 2 (choice set: healthy versus unhealthy, both unhealthy) between-subjects design. The healthy versus unhealthy choice set consisted of a healthy option (salad) and an unhealthy option (fries), the same options as in Studies 1b and 2. The both unhealthy choice set consisted of two unhealthy options (fries and onion rings).

Procedure

As in Study 1b, participants were told that they were participating in a study on "Choices" and that they would make a series of choices for other people. As part of the cover story, all participants saw a photo of a normal-weight White male and were asked to make a t-shirt choice for this person. Then, all participants were randomly assigned to see a photo of an Asian female who was either overweight or normal weight (see Fig. 1b) and to make a side dish choice for themselves and for her. Participants were told to imagine that they had agreed to pick up a take-out dinner and that their friend had told them what she wanted for her entrée but not what she wanted for her side dish. Participants in the healthy versus unhealthy choice set condition were told that when they got to the restaurant, the two available side dishes were fries and salad; participants in the both unhealthy choice set condition were told that the two available side dishes were fries and onion rings. Participants then made a side dish choice for either the overweight friend or the normal-weight friend, followed by a side dish choice for themselves. Demographic information was then collected.

Results and discussion

Matching

A logistic regression was performed on the key dependent variable of matching, coded as one for participants who chose the same side dishes for themselves and the recipient and zero for participants who chose different side dishes for themselves and the recipient. The recipient's weight status was coded as a dummy variable equal to one if the recipient was overweight and zero if the recipient was normal weight. Choice set was coded as a dummy variable equal to one if the choice set contained options differing on the stigma-relevant dimension (fries and side salad) and equal to zero if the choice set contained options that did not differ on the stigma-relevant dimension (fries and onion rings).

The logistic regression revealed a significant interaction between recipient's weight status and choice set, $B = 1.96$, Wald

$\chi^2(1) = 4.89$, $p = .027$ (see Fig. 3). As in Study 1b, when the choice set options differed on the stigma-relevant dimension of healthiness (fries and side salad), participants were significantly more likely to match their side dish choice for the recipient and for themselves when the recipient was overweight (89.7%) than when the recipient was normal weight (60.0%; $\chi^2(1) = 9.56$, $p = .002$). On the other hand, when the choice set options did not differ on the stigma-relevant dimension of healthiness (fries and onion rings), participants were equally likely to choose matching side dishes when the recipient was overweight (48.3%) as when the recipient was normal weight (53.5%; $\chi^2(1) = .14$, $p = .71$). When the choice set options differed on the stigma-relevant dimension of healthiness, the breakdown of the side dish choices by condition was as follows—when the recipient was overweight, 20.7% chose fries for both self and recipient, 69.0% chose salad for both self and recipient, 3.4% chose fries for self and salad for recipient, and 6.9% chose salad for self and fries for recipient; when the recipient was normal weight, 13.3% chose fries for both self and recipient, 46.7% chose salad for both self and recipient, 36.7% chose fries for self and salad for recipient, and 3.3% chose salad for self and fries for recipient. When the choice set options did not differ along the stigma-relevant dimension of healthiness, the breakdown of the side dish choices by condition was as follows—when the recipient was overweight, 31.0% chose fries for both self and recipient, 17.2% chose onion rings for both self and recipient, 27.6% chose fries for self and onion rings for recipient, and 24.1% chose onion rings for self and fries for recipient; when the recipient was normal weight, 40.0% chose fries for both self and recipient, 13.3% chose onion rings for both self and recipient, 13.3% chose fries for self and onion rings for recipient, and 33.3% chose onion rings for self and fries for recipient.

Alternative explanation

A potential alternative explanation for the results in the healthy versus unhealthy choice set condition, and in Studies 1a and 1b, is that participants' food preferences naturally match what participants perceive an overweight person's side dish preferences to be, such that increased matching with an overweight recipient could be due to an artifact of alignment between personal and inferred recipient's food preferences. That is, participants may believe that overweight people prefer an unhealthy option and also prefer the unhealthy option themselves, leading to greater matching with an overweight recipient. The results from Studies 1a, 1b, and 3 did not provide support for this alternative explanation, as Chi-squared tests indicated that the percentage of the total matches within each condition that were unhealthy matches (i.e., cookies/cookies or fries/fries) did not differ between the normal

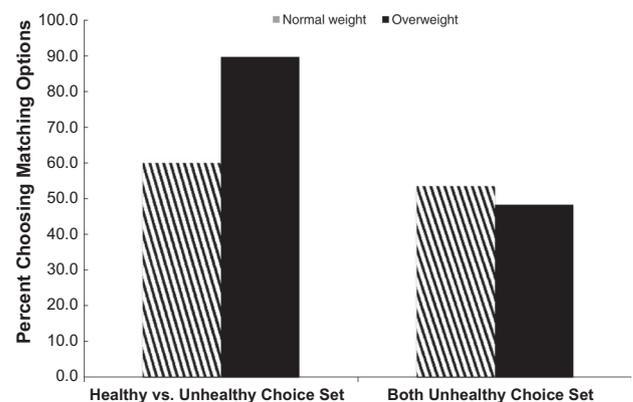


Fig. 3. Matching as a function of recipient's weight and choice-set ("healthy versus unhealthy choice set" versus "both unhealthy choice set") (Study 3).

weight recipient condition and the overweight recipient condition. Therefore, increased matching with an overweight recipient was not an artifact of alignment between personal and inferred recipient's food preferences.

In sum, Study 3 provided additional evidence that people make more matching choices for themselves and a member of a stigmatized group but only when the choice set options differ along a stigma-relevant dimension. The final study examines this proposed process more directly through moderated mediation.

Study 4: Desire to avoid making a stigmatized group member feel negative drives matching

In Study 4, we sought to examine our hypotheses using a moderated mediation approach, testing directly whether concerns about making a stigmatized recipient feel negative mediate the effect of stigmatized group member status on matching. Although Study 2 showed that people have the lay theory that overweight people will have more negative feelings from non-matching choices, and Studies 1a, 1b, and 3 showed that participants behave in a manner that manages these vulnerabilities, the previous studies do not show direct mediation evidence that participants make matching choices to avoid offending a stigmatized group member. Study 4 aims to do so; we predict that the effect of the recipient's weight on matching will be mediated by whether the participant chose the options to make the recipient feel positive (not negative) about her weight; this mediation should only occur for overweight recipients, given that participants are unlikely to be concerned about offending normal-weight recipients with these choices.

Method

Participants and design

Participants on Amazon Mechanical Turk ($N = 681$; 55.2% female) were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (recipient's weight: overweight, normal weight) group between-subjects design. To increase the generalizability of our findings beyond one food scenario, we counterbalanced whether participants were asked to choose two side dishes or two meals in the scenario.

Procedure

Participants were told the same cover story used in Studies 1b and 3 about making a series of choices for other people. Participants were then randomly assigned to choose from two side dishes or two meals for either an overweight or a normal-weight Asian female (see Fig. 1b). Participants asked to choose two side dishes were told to imagine that they had agreed to pick up a take-out dinner and that their friend had told them what she wanted for her entrée but not what she wanted for her side dish. They were then told that when they got to the restaurant, the two available side dishes were fries and salad. Participants asked to choose two meals were told to imagine that they were going to have lunch together with their friend in the cafeteria at work, but that the friend was in a meeting and running late, so she had told the participant to order for her. Participants were then told to imagine that they had gone to the cafeteria and found that the two meals offered that day were a hamburger with fries and a grilled chicken salad. All participants then made a food choice for either the overweight friend or the normal-weight friend, followed by a food choice for themselves. Participants then indicated their agreement with our proposed mediator, the statement "I carefully chose the [side dishes/meals] to make sure Sarah felt positive (not negative) about her weight," on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Participants also provided demographic information.

Results and discussion

Matching

A logistic regression was performed on the key dependent variable of matching, coded as one if participants selected the same dishes for themselves and the recipient and zero if participants selected different dishes for themselves and the recipient. The recipient's weight status was coded as a dummy variable equal to one if the recipient was overweight and zero if the recipient was normal weight. The effect of recipient's weight was the same whether participants were choosing side dishes or meals (a separate 2 (recipient's weight: overweight, normal weight) \times 2 (side dishes, meals) logistic regression on matching revealed no significant interaction: $B = .37$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 1.19$, $p = .276$), so we collapsed across these different choice sets.

As predicted, we again found a significant main effect of recipient's weight on matching ($B = .99$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 33.42$, $p < .001$). Specifically, participants were significantly more likely to match their choices for the recipient and for themselves when the recipient was overweight (78.0%) than when the recipient was normal weight (57.0%). The breakdown of the choices by condition was as follows—when the recipient was overweight, 38.4% chose unhealthy options (fries or hamburger and fries) for both self and recipient, 40.6% chose healthy options (salad or grilled chicken salad) for both self and recipient, 10.5% chose an unhealthy option for self and healthy option for recipient, and 10.5% chose a healthy option for self and an unhealthy option for recipient; when the recipient was normal weight, 11.0% chose unhealthy options for both self and recipient, 43.9% chose healthy options for both self and recipient, 38.9% chose an unhealthy option for self and a healthy option for recipient, and 6.3% chose a healthy option for self and an unhealthy option for recipient.

Moderated mediation analysis

We hypothesized that the effect of recipient's weight on matching would be mediated by participants choosing to make the recipient feel positive, rather than negative, about her weight, but that this mediation would only occur when choosing for an overweight recipient. Therefore, recipient's weight acted both as the independent variable and as the moderator (James & Brett, 1984; Judd & Kenny, 1981; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). Before testing our moderated mediation hypothesis using the recommended bootstrapping procedure (Hayes, 2013; Preacher et al., 2007), we conducted several primary analyses. First, we examined the effect of the recipient's weight on the mediator. As predicted, there was a significant effect of recipient's weight on the mediator, $F(1,679) = 6.91$, $p = .009$, such that participants indicated choosing to make the recipient feel positive about her weight more when the recipient was overweight than when the recipient was normal weight. Second, we examined whether the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable was moderated by recipient's weight. A logistic regression on matching (with recipient's weight, the mean-centered mediator, and their interaction as predictors) revealed a marginally significant interaction between recipient's weight and the mediator, $B = .26$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 2.80$, $p = .094$, indicating that the relationship between the mediator and matching depends upon whether the recipient is overweight or normal weight. To understand this interaction, we examined the simple effect of the mediator on matching separately for an overweight and a normal-weight recipient. When the recipient was overweight, the mediator had a marginally significant effect on matching, $B = .24$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 3.72$, $p = .054$, such that indicating choosing to make the recipient feel positive about her weight was associated with increased matching. On the other hand, when

the recipient was normal weight, the mediator did not have a significant effect on matching, $B = -.03$, Wald $\chi^2(1) = .07$, $p = .785$.

We then tested our moderated mediation hypothesis using the bootstrapping procedure as described by Preacher et al. (2007) using the PROCESS SPSS macro (Model 74), which allows testing of moderated mediation with a binary outcome (Hayes, 2013). The procedure generates a 95% confidence interval around the indirect effects (i.e., the paths through the mediator), such that mediation occurs if the confidence interval does not include zero. The indirect effect of the recipient's weight on matching through the mediator was significant when the recipient was overweight (mean estimate = .0519; 95% confidence interval excluded zero (.0033, .1501) after 5000 bootstrap estimates), whereas the indirect effect of the recipient's weight on matching was not significant when the recipient was normal weight (mean estimate = -.0059; 95% confidence interval included zero (-.0630, .0381) after 5000 bootstrap estimates). Therefore, these results support our hypothesis that wanting the recipient to feel positive about her weight mediated the impact of the recipient's weight on matching but only for an overweight recipient.

General discussion

People frequently make choices for themselves and others, who are often members of stigmatized groups. However, little is understood about how people choose for themselves and stigmatized group members. Past research on choices and dissociative groups (Berger & Heath, 2008; McFerran et al., 2010a; White & Dahl, 2006) suggests that people often want to diverge from stigmatized group members by making different choices for themselves versus members of stigmatized groups. However, in eight studies, we found that the desire to minimize the potential for stigmatized group members to feel negative about themselves leads people to be more likely to make the same choices for themselves and for members of stigmatized groups, but only when the choice options differ on a stigma-relevant dimension (e.g., the dimension of healthiness when choosing for oneself and an overweight other). Under such circumstances, people choose matching options (both unhealthy or both healthy options) rather than non-matching options (unhealthy option for one person and healthy option for other) to avoid offending stigmatized others with their choices.

Specifically, our first five studies demonstrated with actual and hypothetical choices across multiple choice domains, and with different stigmatized groups, that people choose the same products for self and recipient more often when the recipient is a stigmatized group member. The next three studies examined the process for this effect in the food choice domain with the stigmatized group of the overweight/obese. Specifically, the sixth study demonstrated that people have the lay theory that ordering foods that differ on the stigma-relevant dimension of healthiness for oneself and for an overweight or normal-weight recipient will not affect the feelings of a normal-weight recipient but will hurt the feelings of an overweight recipient. The seventh study demonstrated that increased matching with overweight others only occurs when the two foods being chosen from differ on the stigma-relevant dimension of healthiness. When the two foods being chosen from did not differ on the stigma-relevant dimension of healthiness, participants did not choose matching items more for themselves and the overweight recipient. The eighth study demonstrated that the effect of recipient's weight on matching food choices was mediated by a desire to make the recipient feel positive and not negative about her weight, but that mediation only occurred when the recipient was overweight. Collectively, these studies show that people believe that making matching choices for themselves and a stigma-

tized group member minimizes the potential to hurt the stigmatized group member and that they act according to these beliefs.

Although we primarily discuss the driver of carefully regulating one's choices for self and stigmatized other as being the motive to avoid hurting the stigmatized other, the use of matching can have the intended or unintended effect of benefiting oneself (Batson & Shaw, 1991). That is, people can pursue a matching strategy with the intent of also making oneself appear friendly and unprejudiced to the stigmatized group member or to outside observers (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Snyder et al., 1979). Indeed, prior research has found that people are motivated to avoid seeming racist (Apfelbaum et al., 2008) or discriminatory (Snyder et al., 1979), suggesting that a matching strategy may be driven both by motives to avoid hurting stigmatized others and to benefit the self by appearing non-discriminatory.

Theoretical contributions

This research extends our existing theoretical knowledge of social influences on choice and choosing for oneself and others in several important ways. First, we reconcile conflicting predictions, derived from two distinct and previously separate bodies of research, about whether people would be more likely to make the same or different product choices for self and stigmatized group member recipient. One body of research finds that people desire to have different products from members of stigmatized groups (Berger & Heath, 2008; McFerran et al., 2010a; White & Dahl, 2006) and leads to a prediction of making non-matching choices for self and stigmatized group member recipient. A separate body of research finds that people sometimes alter their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior in the presence of stigmatized group members (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Lowery et al., 2001; Norton et al., 2012; Sinclair, Huntsinger, et al., 2005; Snyder et al., 1979) and leads to a prediction of making matching product choices for self and stigmatized group member recipient. Our findings can be reconciled with past research finding that people prefer to dissociate from the choices of members of stigmatized groups; in the present studies, (1) participants chose for both themselves and the stigmatized group member and (2) participants had the added expectation that they would consume in the presence of the stigmatized group member. Both of these factors likely increased participants' concerns about offending stigmatized group members through making choices for themselves and stigmatized group members that differed on a stigma-relevant dimension. Indeed, these studies highlight that it is important to consider the social context when predicting how people make choices. In many real-life situations, people choose products for both themselves and for others (Laran, 2010), and work and consume together with others (Ariely & Levav, 2000). Under these circumstances, we demonstrate that people may be especially concerned about how stigmatized group members may feel based upon their choices, such that they may not diverge from the choices of stigmatized group members and may instead act to reduce or eliminate the potential for offense.

Although our research builds upon earlier research on implicit social tuning, which finds that certain circumstances prompt people to align their beliefs and attitudes to be the same as those of others (Lowery et al., 2001; Sinclair, Huntsinger, et al., 2005), there are several important differences between the current research and the implicit social tuning literature. First and most obviously, we investigate choice behavior, not implicit attitudes and beliefs. Second, and most importantly, the process of the current effects is completely different than the process underlying social tuning effects. Our findings do not reflect a change in attitudes resulting from exposure to someone else's attitudes. That is, in our studies, when someone chooses two salads or two orders of fries, they are not doing so because they infer that the other person holds a

certain attitude about salads or fries (a fact that is made clear by the equal tendency for participants to choose two salads versus two fries regardless of the other person's weight). Instead, in our studies, participants match choices to avoid inadvertently offending a recipient by communicating that they have inferred a preference based on group membership. Thus, this is not “tuning” to the other's desires. It is avoiding offense by avoiding communicating any kind of group-based expectation. Indeed, although participants may alter their choices to attain matching, it is quite likely that they still retain their own beliefs and preferences.

On a related note, we examine increased matching between self and other as a function of whether the other person is a stigmatized group member rather than as a function of the other person's purported attitudes. In the social tuning literature, implicit social tuning with stigmatized group members is driven by beliefs about the other person's purported attitudes rather than by their stigmatized group member status (Sinclair, Lowery, et al., 2005 and Sinclair, Huntsinger, et al., 2005). For instance, in one experiment, researchers varied both the experimenter's race (Black or White) and the experimenter's purported racial attitudes (wearing an “eracism” shirt or a neutral shirt) and found that participants' automatic prejudicial beliefs aligned with the experimenter's purported racial attitudes rather than the experimenter's race. Our research varies the other person's stigmatized group member status but not purported attitudes. Our effect is not driven by perceived attitudes, but instead, directly by group status. It is also worth noting that the social tuning literature emphasizes that attitude change is implicit rather than explicit. In comparison, although it is quite likely that implicit processes may shape some part of choice matching, we find evidence in Study 4 that an explicit process mediates the matching effect. Thus, in sum, prior work has shown that individuals unconsciously shift their own attitudes to align with the attitudes of others, as a way to promote smooth interactions. The current work shows that individuals consciously and strategically make the same choices for self and other, as a way to avoid communicating any kind of group-based judgment about what others would prefer.

Our research also builds upon earlier research demonstrating that people alter their behavior in the presence of stigmatized group members (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Snyder et al., 1979). This earlier work beautifully illustrates the importance of stigmatized group membership in guiding behavior. Our research builds upon these studies and provides a novel contribution in several ways. Most importantly, we propose and find evidence for a new strategy that individuals use when interacting with stigmatized group members. In addition to mimicking others' behavior (Apfelbaum et al., 2008) and sitting next to them (Snyder et al., 1979), individuals can also make matching choices for self and other. In addition, prior research examined the motivation to avoid seeming racist or discriminatory. Our work examines an alternative motive—the desire to avoid hurting the stigmatized group member (e.g., “I don't want to make the overweight person feel negative about her weight”). Although matching may be multiply determined by concerns about offending the feelings of the recipient as well as concerns about how the self will be seen, our theory and findings emphasize the recipient's feelings and the desire to avoid offending stigmatized recipients. Finally, our work looks at product choices, a domain in which the predominant finding has been that people avoid products possessed by stigmatized group members (Berger & Heath, 2008; Berger & Rand, 2008; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Johnston, 2002; McFerran et al., 2010a; White & Dahl, 2006, 2007). Thus, we build upon and contribute to literature on interacting with members of stigmatized groups to suggest that concerns about hurting others can lead people to make the same choices for self and stigmatized group members.

Finally, our findings suggest that people may often use a general matching strategy to try to create smoother social interactions when making choices for both themselves and stigmatized group members. We find specifically that people pursue this strategy by making choices that are the same along a stigma-relevant dimension, as a way to minimize the possibility that recipients will compare the choices and feel negative. This matching strategy may be used across choice domains, as a general way to avoid offending others or causing social tension. For example, coworkers concerned about offending members of stereotyped groups (whether functional or divisional organizational groups or social categories) may attempt to match choices of tasks and job domains when working in diverse teams. For instance, when delegating tasks that require having good memory, co-workers may seek to avoid hurting elderly team members and assign tasks requiring equally good memory to elderly and young team members. In addition, people may use a matching strategy either consciously or nonconsciously to facilitate smoother social interactions. In a sense, a matching strategy may be somewhat analogous to mimicry, or the tendency that people have to unknowingly imitate another's behaviors (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999; Lakin & Chartrand, 2003). The extensive line of research on mimicry finds that nonconsciously matching the physical behaviors of others leads to smoother social interactions, increased trust, and increased affiliation between partners (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999; Lakin & Chartrand, 2003). Thus a matching choice strategy might likewise be pursued consciously or nonconsciously to create smoother social interactions.

In sum, this paper highlights the importance of examining the unique goals that may arise in social situations, such as when choosing for both self and other, and the downstream effects of such goals on choice strategies.

Limitations and future directions

One limitation of this paper is that in order to maximize experimental control, participants were constrained to making choices for themselves and for a recipient without being allowed to further interact with the recipient before making the choices. In the real world, such constrained choice situations do occur, such as when a recipient is stuck in a meeting or otherwise cannot be reached, or when one co-worker is in charge of task assignments for a group; yet, there are also situations in which interaction between selectors and recipients is possible. When interaction is possible, selectors could use a strategy such as going out of their way to directly ask recipients what items they want and then choosing for themselves either the same item or a different item. This strategy, and other alternatives to the matching strategy, could be explored further. Additionally, future research could explore whether people try to actively avoid situations in which they are responsible for making stigma-relevant choices for stigmatized others.

Another direction for future research is to examine whether characteristics of the chooser affect use of a matching strategy. A limitation of our studies outside of the food domain is that almost all participants were not members of the focal stigmatized group (in Study 1c, very few participants were Black; in Study 1d, very few participants were elderly; and in Study 1e, no participants were students at a lower-status school). In our studies in the food domain, some participants were members of the focal stigmatized group of the overweight or obese. Across these studies, there was a general lack of moderation of the effect of matching by participant BMI (see Footnote 2). This lack of moderation may be because the cultural stigma of giving an overweight person a food that differs in healthiness from what you get for yourself is quite pervasive across body types. The lack of moderation by participant BMI in Study 2 indicates that participants' predictions of how they think an overweight recipient versus normal-weight recipient would feel about

receiving matching versus non-matching food combinations from them does not differ based upon participant BMI. Additionally, this pervasive stigma against non-matching may be related to the finding that the cultural stigma against the overweight even exists among people with overweight body types (Wang, Brownell, & Wadden, 2004).

Future research could also test instances when people may use a non-matching strategy to satisfy their goals. One such instance may occur when people intend to offend a stigmatized other. For example, if selectors feel like they have been placed in positions of relatively low power by high status others, they may try to reassert their power not through interactions with high status others but through interactions with stigmatized group members by reminding stigmatized group members of their stigma. Additionally, people may derive utility from observing disliked out-groups suffer (Leach, Spears, Branscombe, & Doosje, 2003) and may actively attempt to obtain this utility by hurting out-groups through behavior such as offensive non-matching. Another instance in which people may use a non-matching strategy is when people who are low on a valued dimension (e.g., attractiveness, athleticism, or intelligence) choose an item for themselves and another person. In this case, a non-matching strategy may be better for minimizing the likelihood of the recipient comparing the choices and making the negative inference that the person low on that dimension was implying equality on that dimension. Although we did not find evidence for the use of a non-matching strategy by stigmatized group members in our studies, perhaps people may use a non-matching strategy in other domains.

Finally, future research should also examine related choice situations often encountered in the real world. For instance, there are frequently sequential ordering situations (Ariely & Levav, 2000) in which people make choices after stigmatized group members have already made their own choices, but with the knowledge that they will be consuming together. In these situations, people may also be concerned about the messages they are sending by not matching the stigmatized group member's choice, although this concern is likely much smaller than the concern that arises from choosing both for oneself and for a stigmatized group member.

Conclusion

People often work and consume alongside and together with others. In these situations, people commonly make choices not only for themselves but also for others (e.g., picking up take-out for oneself and a colleague). Although these decisions may seem trivial, we find that interpersonal motivations can alter their choices, particularly when these others are members of stigmatized groups, as the potential for offending them arises. We find that this desire to avoid offending stigmatized group members can lead people to be more likely to choose the same products for themselves and stigmatized group members. At first glance, these results may seem to be at odds with a large body of research, which finds that people prefer to have products that are different from those of stigmatized group members (Berger & Heath, 2008; McFerran et al., 2010a). However, we drew from a separate body of research that finds that people sometimes alter their behavior to avoid offending stigmatized group members (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Dovidio et al., 2002; Monteith et al., 2002; Norton et al., 2012; Snyder et al., 1979). In light of this second body of research, our focus on joint consumption settings, in which the selector's potential for offending others is high, allows us to reconcile our research with the first body of research. In sum, this paper highlights the importance of examining the unique goals that may arise in social situations, such as when choosing for both self and

other, and the downstream effects of such goals on choice strategies.

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