

# The role of social projection in consumers' commonness fallacy

Shankha Basu<sup>1</sup>  | Jingyu Zhu<sup>1</sup>  | Krishna Savani<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Marketing Department, Leeds University Business School, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

<sup>2</sup>Department of Management and Marketing, Faculty of Business, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China

## Correspondence

Shankha Basu, Leeds University Business School, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT, UK.

Email: [s.basu1@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:s.basu1@leeds.ac.uk)

## Abstract

Recent research suggests that consumers often exhibit the “commonness fallacy” by overestimating the likelihood of others choosing a frequently consumed item (e.g., vanilla ice cream) rather than a less frequently consumed item (e.g., tiramisu). This research tests whether the extent to which consumers perceive their choices as similar to others—their social projection tendency—explains the commonness fallacy. Two preregistered studies ( $N = 605$ ) found that consumers with a higher social projection tendency overestimated the extent to which others would choose commonly consumed options if they themselves chose such options over less commonly consumed options. However, social projection cannot fully explain the commonness fallacy as participants with lower social projection tendencies also displayed the commonness fallacy in both studies. The findings delineate the commonness fallacy from consumers' well-documented tendency to view others' choices as similar to their own.

## KEYWORDS

commonness fallacy, false consensus, heuristics, social projection

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Imagine that you are ordering ice cream for a party and are considering vanilla, a relatively commonly consumed ice cream flavor, and blueberry, a less commonly consumed flavor. You need to estimate how many guests would choose each flavor. Recent research suggests that people systematically exhibit the “commonness fallacy”—they overestimate others' interest in choosing a common option when it is pitted against a less common option (Reit & Critcher, 2020). If you are like the average participant in their studies, you will overestimate the proportion of guests who would prefer vanilla over blueberry ice cream.

Consumers often need to predict others' preferences, for instance, when buying gifts (Wooten, 2000). Such predictions are not limited to consumers; managers regularly need to predict customer preferences (Hoch, 1988; Weitz et al., 1986). However, it is hard to predict what others think. Consumer researchers have long

documented people's tendency to mispredict others' preferences and choices (Barasz et al., 2016; David, 2018; Frederick, 2012; Gershoff et al., 2008; Givi & Das, 2021). A recurring finding in this literature is that people use their own behavior as a reference when predicting others' behavior (Krueger, 1998; Marks & Miller, 1987).

The commonness fallacy is distinct from such social projection. Social projection or false-consensus bias implies that consumers think most others would like products they like. Such studies measure participants' preferences and predictions of others' preferences in isolation (say, for chocolate ice cream). However, the commonness fallacy involves specific choices between a frequently consumed (chocolate ice cream) and a less frequently consumed (blueberry) option. As Reit and Critcher (2020) documented, how common an option is may guide people's predictions in such situations. However, social projection may also play a role, and the commonness fallacy might merely reflect social projection—consumers predict that others will

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choose what they choose. In the present research, we aim to dissociate the two effects. Specifically, we test if commonness fallacy manifests in consumers with low social projection tendencies. If it does, it will give both researchers and practitioners greater confidence in the commonness fallacy as a heuristic independent of social projection.

### 1.1 | Commonness fallacy

Reit and Critcher's (2020) studies found that people overestimate others' interest in choosing a commonly consumed option rather than a less commonly consumed one. In a typical study, they asked participants to choose between a common item and a less common item—helping them establish the actual choice shares. Additionally, they asked participants to forecast the percentage of other participants in the study who would choose each of the two options—a paradigm commonly used in consumer research (e.g., Frederick, 2012; Kurt & Inman, 2013). Across studies, participants systematically overestimated the choice share of the common item, thus exhibiting the commonness fallacy.

Why does this overestimation happen? It is probably true that frequently consumed items, such as vanilla ice cream, are more often chosen in the marketplace. An alternative possibility is that common items are cheaper to manufacture, which increases the supply of such items in the marketplace. Consumers buy common items more often because they are cheaper. Reit and Critcher (2020) argue that people erroneously use the perceived commonness of the item as a heuristic for predicting others' choices when the common item is presented along with a less common item. For instance, while vanilla flavor is more frequently consumed, imagine a consumer making a specific choice between vanilla and blueberry flavors. There is no reason to believe that just because most consumers choose vanilla from a relatively large assortment of ice creams available in a supermarket (maybe because it is cheaper), this particular consumer would also choose vanilla over blueberry in this specific instance when cost, convenience, and all other factors are held constant.

### 1.2 | Commonness fallacy as an egocentric bias

A rich body of consumer research literature has documented asymmetries between people's predictions of their own versus others' behaviors. For instance, consumers are more likely to overestimate how much others are willing to pay for a product than how much they would themselves pay (Frederick, 2012; Kurt & Inman, 2013). Similarly, while consumers like dissimilar products (e.g., horror movies and documentaries), they predict that others will dislike dissimilar products (Barasz et al., 2016). Further, consumers systematically believe that certain types of advertising will affect others more than themselves (Xie & Johnson, 2015; Yoon et al., 2000).

As consumers find it challenging to predict others' preferences accurately, they use a variety of strategies to ease this difficulty. They use others' previous choices to predict their future preferences (Barasz et al., 2016; Orhun & Urmitsky, 2013). They also use

attributes of the options or the decisions to make the predictions. For instance, when choosing for others, consumers tend to focus on how indulgent the product is (Laran, 2010). Similarly, as Reit and Critcher (2020) documented, consumers focus on how common each option is when predicting others' choices. As we discussed above, a third possibility is that people simply use their own preferences as anchors. They might estimate that a greater percentage of others would like a product if they like the product (David, 2018; Gershoff et al., 2008).

Participants in Reit and Critcher's (2020) studies overestimated the share of common options when they chose the common option; so social projection may explain commonness fallacy. However, imagine that in the opening vignette, the overall objective choice share of the vanilla flavor is 25%, and of blueberry, 75%. A consumer who has chosen blueberry has predicted that 40% of others would choose the vanilla flavor. While they did exhibit social projection (i.e., they predicted most others would choose blueberry), they still overestimated the choice share of vanilla flavor. Their predictions can be a function of social projection and some heuristic usage (e.g., the option's commonness). To delineate the effect of the two factors on commonness fallacy, we draw from the literature on social projection theory and the false consensus effect (Robbins & Krueger, 2005).

### 1.3 | Commonness fallacy and social projection

False consensus effect, or the belief that others' preferences are similar to one's own, can systematically affect consumer judgment. Consumers might believe others would like the same products they like (Gershoff et al., 2008). When reading online reviews, they might believe that reviewers are similar to themselves (Naylor et al., 2011). Such mistaken beliefs can affect their behavior. For instance, fearful investors sell off their stocks earlier if they believe that other investors share their risk attitude (Lee & Andrade, 2011). Research has shown that factors such as target knowledge (Lerouge & Warlop, 2006), interpersonal attachment styles (David, 2018), and empathy (Hattula et al., 2015) can affect social projection tendencies.

Drawing on this area of research, we argue that consumer differences in social projection tendencies might help us tease apart the effect of egocentric bias (i.e., false consensus effect) and options feature (i.e., perceived commonness of an option) in driving the commonness fallacy. We expect consumers with a high social projection tendency to project their own choices onto others. If they chose the commonly consumed (vs. less commonly consumed) option, they would predict that most others would also choose the commonly consumed (vs. less commonly consumed) option.

Consumers with low social projection tendencies may predict others' choices in two possible ways. First, such consumers might make accurate forecasts of others' choices as they are less likely to use their own choices as anchors. Past research suggests that sometimes, social forecasts can be quite accurate (Helzer & Dunning, 2012). For example, people's judgments about others' heights correlated with their own height, but the mean prediction was accurate (Ward, 1967). If this is the case, we will find that commonness fallacy disappears

when people don't rely on their own preferences, providing evidence for a wholly egocentric explanation for the phenomenon.

The other possibility is that instead of using their own choices as anchors, such consumers use some aspect of the choice context—perhaps the perceived commonness of the option—as a heuristic. Many discrepancies between judgments of others' preferences versus ones' own can be explained over and above any effect predicted by mere social projection. For instance, consumers estimate how much others will pay for an item based on what they are willing to pay themselves, but also bias their estimates upwards, resulting in an overestimation (Frederick, 2012). Similarly, projection can explain only a part of the effect of indirect (“How much will another student donate?”) versus direct (“How much would you donate?”) survey items (Jang & Irwin, 2020). If commonness fallacy occurs over and above the social projection effect, we should observe commonness fallacy for consumers with low social projection tendencies.

## 2 | OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

We report two preregistered studies. In both studies, participants chose between pair(s) of commonly and less commonly chosen options and predicted others' choice(s). In Study 1, participants made a single choice between a common or less common candy. In Study 2, they made 11 choices spanning multiple product categories. Table 1 shows an overview of both studies. In both studies, we tested whether participants' choices and social projection tendencies interact to explain the commonness fallacy. We also tested if consumers with low social projection tendencies exhibit the commonness fallacy. We report all participants, conditions, and measures. Stimuli, data, and results are available at <https://osf.io/74vdj/>. See Supporting Information Materials for additional information.

## 3 | STUDY 1

In Study 1, we tested if the extent to which people overestimate the choice of common options based on their own choice depends on their level of social projection tendency. We preregistered the sample

size, stimuli, measures, and analyses for this study on OSF: <https://osf.io/ht8v3>.

### 3.1 | Participants

Based on power analysis (see Supporting Information Materials), we posted a study for 400 participants from the United States on Cloudresearch. We used the Cloudresearch approved panel, a service that enables researchers to recruit Amazon Mechanical Turk participants who have passed Cloudresearch's attention check and other data quality measures. In response, 405 participants ( $M_{\text{age}} = 40.48$  years, 182 males, 214 females, 3 other genders, 6 unreported) completed the study.

### 3.2 | Procedure

We measured participants' choices and their predictions of others' choices for two candy bars: Milky Way Original and Milky Way Midnight Dark (as used in Reit & Critcher, 2020; Study 4) as the common and the less common option, respectively. We randomized the order of the choice and prediction tasks.

#### 3.2.1 | Choice

We asked participants: “If you have the choice to receive one of the following two items, which one would you choose?” Participants indicated their choice between Milky Way Original and Milky Way Midnight Dark by clicking on one of the options.

#### 3.2.2 | Predictions

We informed participants that we would ask 100 other participants in the study to choose between Milky Way Original and Milky Way Midnight Dark. We asked participants to estimate how many of these 100

**TABLE 1** Overview of studies

	Study 1	Study 2
Aim	Providing initial evidence	Establishing generalizability
Number of participants	405	200
Stimuli	Common vs. less common candy bars	11 different choice pairs of frequently or less frequently consumed options
Social projection measure	Context-specific	General
Dependent variable	Net overprediction of the choice share of the common candy bar	Average overprediction of the choice share of the common options across 11 pairs
Key test	Interactive effect of participants' own choices of candy bar and their social projection on the dependent variable	Interactive effect of the total number of less frequently consumed options participants chose and their social projection tendency on the dependent variable

participants would choose the two options. Participants reported two separate forecasts for the two options such that the total added to 100.

### 3.2.3 | Social projection

Participants' social projection tendency is generally inferred from their choices and predictions in the literature. Therefore, there is a lack of a reliable individual difference measure for social projection. As discussed above, both social projection and commonness fallacy can determine participants' predictions in the present context. Therefore, we created a two-item measure by following items measuring similarity between self and others developed by Toma et al. (2012). This is consistent with the key idea of social projection that people believe that most others would behave the same way as them. After the choice and predictions task, we asked participants to indicate on a 7-point scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*;  $r = 0.97$ ): (1) "When faced with the option of choosing between Milky Way Original bar and Milky Way Midnight Dark bar, most people's choice will be similar to my own choice." (2) "When faced with the option of choosing between Milky Way Original bar and Milky Way Midnight Dark bar, most people will choose what I have chosen." The study ended with measures of demographic details.

## 3.3 | Results

### 3.3.1 | Commonness fallacy and the role of self-choice

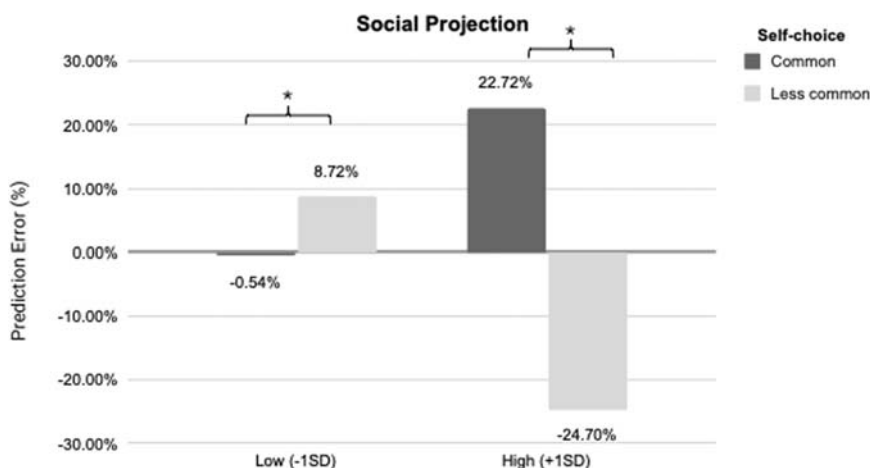
Participants chose the common option, Milky Way Original, 54.30% (95% confidence interval [CI] = [49.10%, 59.00%]) of the time. However, they estimated that 65.92% ( $SD = 17.83%$ , 95% CI = [64.00%, 67.67%]) of others would choose the common option. We calculated the prediction error by subtracting the actual choice share of the common option (i.e., 54.30%) from each participant's predicted choice share. This number could be negative (i.e., participants underpredict the choice

share of the common option), zero (i.e., perfect prediction), or positive (i.e., participants overpredict the choice share of the common option—commonness fallacy). The average overprediction was 11.62% ( $SD = 17.83$ ) which was statistically different from zero ( $t(404) = 13.12$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.65$ ). These results replicated the commonness fallacy effect. However, participants' overprediction was higher when they themselves chose the common option ( $M = 18.07%$ , 95% CI = [16.27, 20.03],  $SD = 14.10$ ) than when they chose the less common option ( $M = 3.95%$ , 95% CI = [1.30, 6.63],  $SD = 18.76$ ,  $t(403) = 8.63$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.85$ ).

### 3.3.2 | Role of social projection

To examine the role of social projection, we conducted a moderation analysis using Model 1 of the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). We entered participants' overprediction of the choice share of the common option as the dependent variable (Y), their own choice (common = 1, less common = 0) as the independent variable (X) and their social projection tendency (mean-centered) as the moderator (W). The overall model was significant ( $F(3,401) = 170.93$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.56$ ). We found a significant effect of self-choice ( $B = 19.07$ , 95% CI = [15.97, 22.17],  $SE = 1.58$ ,  $t(401) = 12.09$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), social projection ( $B = -9.89$ , 95% CI = [-11.03, -8.74],  $SE = 0.58$ ,  $t(401) = -16.97$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and a significant interaction effect ( $B = 16.77$ , 95% CI = [14.88, 18.65],  $SE = 0.96$ ,  $t(401) = 17.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

To examine this interaction effect, we conducted spotlight analyses at one standard deviation above and below the mean of participants' social projection tendency (Figure 1). For participants higher on social projection (+1SD), those who chose the common option had a higher overprediction of the choice share of the common option ( $M = 22.72%$ ) compared with those who chose the less common option ( $M = -24.70%$ ,  $B = 47.41$ , 95% CI = [43.23, 51.58],  $SE = 2.12$ ,  $t(401) = 22.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This difference attenuated for participants who were less likely (-1SD) to socially project their preferences ( $M_{\text{self-common}} = -0.54%$ ,  $M_{\text{self-less-common}} = 8.72%$ ,  $B = -9.27$ , 95% CI = [-13.96, -4.57],  $SE = 2.39$ ,  $t(401) = -3.88$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).



**FIGURE 1** Prediction error based on participants' self-choice and social projection in Study 1

### 3.3.3 | Commonness fallacy at low levels of social projection

To test if participants with low social projection tendency exhibited commonness fallacy, we ran a regression with overprediction as the dependent variable and participants' social projection, centered at one standard deviation below the mean, as the independent variable (Spiller et al., 2013). The constant term in this regression would indicate the mean level of overprediction at low level of social projection and, if it is significantly different from zero – the point of accuracy. We found that these participants with low social projection tendency did exhibit the commonness fallacy ( $B = 10.54$ , 95% CI = [8.35, 12.59],  $SE = 1.25$ ,  $t(403) = 8.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) indicating an average overprediction of 10.54%.

### 3.3.4 | Discussion

These results show that participants with a higher tendency to socially project overestimated the choice share of the common option when they chose the common (vs. less common) option. This difference attenuated for participants with a lower tendency to socially project. However, participants with low social projection tendency did exhibit a statistically significant level of the commonness fallacy.

## 4 | STUDY 2

We had two aims in this study. Firstly, Study 1 used only one pair of products as stimuli. In this study, we aimed to increase the generalizability of the findings by using 11 pairs of frequently and less frequently consumed items. Second, the social projection measure in the previous study was context relevant. In this study, we used a general measure of social projection to examine if individual differences in social projection yield similar results as Study 1. We preregistered the sample size, stimuli, measures, and analyses for this study on OSF: <https://osf.io/hpa9z>.

### 4.1 | Participants

We posted a study for 200 US participants from the Cloudresearch approved panel on Cloudresearch (see Supporting Information Materials). In response, 200 participants ( $M_{\text{age}} = 38.69$  years, 113 women, 86 men, and 1 other gender) completed the study.

### 4.2 | Procedure

We presented participants with 11 pairs of options. In each pair, one option was common, and the other was less common. The options were the same as those used in Reit and Critcher's (2020) Study 1. We presented these 11 option pairs twice, once for predictions and once for choice. We randomized the presentation order of the choice task and the prediction task.

### 4.2.1 | Choices

We presented participants with 11 pairs of options, each on a separate page. We randomized the presentation order of the 11 pairs and the options within each pair. For each pair, we asked participants to choose one of the options. For instance, we asked participants, "If you had the choice of the following options for dinner tomorrow night, which would you choose?" Participants could indicate that they would choose either *Thai food*, the less common option, or *Pizza*, the common option.

### 4.2.2 | Predictions

We presented the same 11 pairs with the same randomization as described above. We told participants that we would present these pairs to 100 other participants in the study and that they must predict how many of those 100 participants would choose the two options. For instance, participants could indicate how many people would choose *Thai food* and *Pizza* such that the total added up to 100.

### 4.2.3 | Social projection

We adapted the items from Study 1 to measure the extent to which participants generally thought that others' choices would be similar to their own. We measured these items along with other demographic measures at the end of the study. Specifically, we asked participants to indicate on a 7-point scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*;  $r = 0.87$ ): (1) In general, most people's choices are similar to my own choice, and (2) In general, most people choose what I choose.

## 4.3 | Results

### 4.3.1 | Commonness fallacy

We first calculated participants' overprediction of the choice of the common option for each of the 11 choice pairs separately using the same method described in Study 1. For instance, we calculated the extent to which participants overpredicted the choice share of *Pizza* (over *Thai food*) by subtracting the percentage of participants who chose *pizza* from each participant's prediction of the percentage of others who would choose *Pizza*. Next, we calculated the average of these 11 overpredictions, forming our dependent measure. We also calculated the sum of all the less common options participants chose for themselves across the 11 pairs.

### 4.3.2 | Commonness fallacy and self-choice

Overall, participants made an average prediction error of 4.67% (95% CI = [3.30, 6.00],  $SD = 9.80$ ) which was significantly different from

zero ( $t(199) = 6.74, p < 0.001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.48$ ). A linear regression indicated that the more less-common options participants chose for themselves, the lower were their prediction errors ( $B = -1.31$ , 95% CI =  $[-1.97, -0.74]$ ,  $SE = 0.32$ ,  $t(194) = -4.50, p < 0.001$ ). Four participants who did not respond to all 11 choice pairs were excluded from this and subsequent regressions. See Table S1 in Supporting Information Materials for additional analysis as well as the prediction errors for all 11 pairs.

#### 4.3.3 | Role of social projection

We conducted a moderation analysis using Model 1 of the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013) and entered participants' average prediction error as the dependent variable (Y), the number of less common options they chose (mean-centered) as the independent variable (X), and their tendency to socially project (mean-centered) as the moderator (W). The overall model was significant ( $F(3,192) = 10.62, p < 0.001, R^2 = 0.14$ ). We found a significant effect of participants' own choice of less common options ( $B = -1.55$ , 95% CI =  $[-2.14, -0.96]$ ,  $SE = 0.30$ ,  $t(192) = -5.20, p < 0.001$ ), a marginally significant effect of social projection ( $B = -1.14$ , 95% CI =  $[-2.36, 0.079]$ ,  $SE = 0.62$ ,  $t(192) = -1.84, p = 0.067$ ), and a significant interaction effect ( $B = -0.63$ , 95% CI =  $[-1.16, -0.10]$ ,  $SE = 0.27$ ,  $t(192) = -2.33, p = 0.021$ ).

Figure 2 graphically represents the average overprediction for participants who chose fewer ( $-1SD$ ) and many ( $+1SD$ ) less common options themselves at low ( $-1SD$ ) and high ( $+1SD$ ) points of the social projection measure. The difference in participants' overprediction based on their own choice of less common options was significant for participants who had higher ( $+1SD$ ) tendency to socially project ( $B = -2.25$ , 95% CI =  $[-3.14, -1.37]$ ,  $SE = 0.45$ ,  $t(192) = -5.01, p < 0.001$ ). This difference attenuated for participants who had a lower ( $-1SD$ ) tendency to socially project ( $B = -0.84$ , 95% CI =  $[-1.63, -0.06]$ ,  $SE = 0.40$ ,  $t(192) = -2.12, p = 0.035$ ). Thus, as in Study 1, the effect of participants' own choice on their overprediction diminished if they had a lower tendency to socially project.

#### 4.3.4 | Commonness fallacy at low levels of social projection

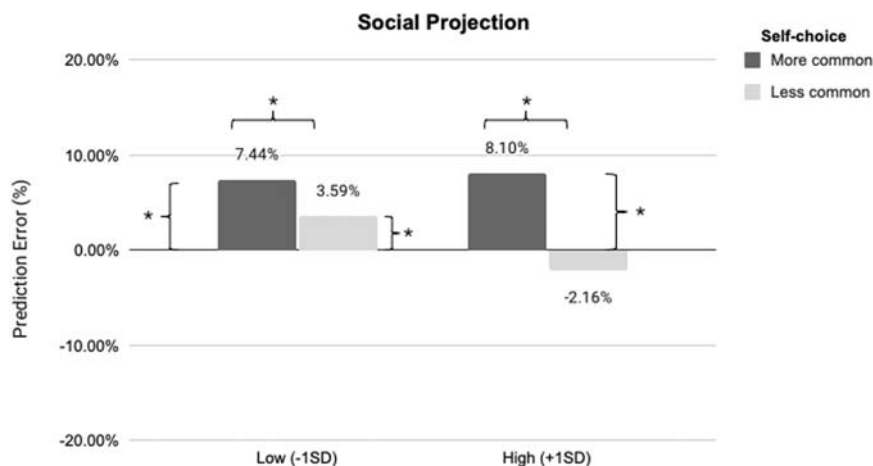
While Figure 2 shows the average levels of prediction errors at four focal points, we wanted to test if these prediction errors were significantly different from zero. To this end, we ran four different linear regressions by centering the two independent variables—the number of less common options that participants chose and their social projection tendency—to  $+1SD$  or  $-1SD$  of their values. The full models are reported in Supporting Information Materials. As in Study 1, we examined the coefficients of the intercept term in these regressions. As shown in Figure 2, participants who had a lower tendency to socially project significantly overpredicted the share of common options irrespective of whether they chose fewer or many less-common options. These results suggest that commonness fallacy occurs over and above any social projection tendency that people might have.

#### 4.4 | Discussion

As in Study 1, participants' overprediction of the choice of the common option depended on their own choice and their tendency to socially project. Participants with a higher tendency to socially project overestimated the share of the common option when they chose more common (vs. less common) options. But more importantly, we show that participants with a lower tendency to socially project overestimated the choice share of the common option irrespective of their own choices.

### 5 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

This research shows that commonness fallacy can be partly explained by consumers' tendency to think that others' choices are similar to their own—their social projection tendency. In both studies, participants' overprediction of the choice share of the common



**FIGURE 2** Prediction error based on participants' self-choice and social projection in Study 2



option was positively related to their own choice of the common option. The difference in overprediction of participants who chose the common and less common options themselves attenuated at lower levels of social projection. However, in both studies, participants with low social projection tendency also exhibited statistically significant levels of commonness fallacy. The results suggest that the newly documented phenomenon of commonness fallacy occurs over and above the effect of social projection.

## 6 | IMPLICATIONS AND NEW RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This research note aimed to contribute to theory and spur greater research in multiple lines of inquiry. Our foremost contribution is to the nascent literature on commonness fallacy. To the best of our knowledge, ours is the only second study documenting this effect. In addition to replicating this phenomenon, we show that social projection cannot completely explain it. Participants with low social projection systematically overpredicted the choice of the common option irrespective of their own choices. This suggests that the phenomenon might have multiple antecedents that future research can explore. For instance, in both studies, commonness fallacy at low social projection was partly driven by participants who chose the less common option. A possible reason might be that to bolster their uniqueness, such participants were motivated to believe that others would choose more common options (Irmak et al., 2010). Future research should explore such novel accounts for the phenomenon. Finally, we measured social projection as an individual difference in both studies after the main task. While Study 2 minimized any effect that the task would have on participants' responses to this measure, future research can aim to replicate our results by experimentally manipulating social projection.

We also contribute to the research on consumers' misprediction of others' choices and preferences (Barasz et al., 2016; Frederick, 2012; Gershoff et al., 2008). Research in this area suggests that when predicting others' choices, consumers either anchor their predictions on their own preferences (e.g., Gershoff et al., 2008) or some attribute of an option such as how indulgent (Laran, 2010) or common (Reit & Critcher, 2020) the option is. We contribute to the growing body of research that both factors can have unique influences on consumers' predictions (e.g., Frederick, 2012; Jang & Irwin, 2020). Future researchers can examine if such joint effects can be found in other previously documented mispredictions, such as the misprediction of the effectiveness of advertising on others (e.g., Mo et al., 2018).

Given that commonness fallacy is related to social projection, our findings suggest that how commonness fallacy is related to other egocentric fallacies and biases needs more examination. For instance, research has documented various fallacies originating from consumers' construal level (Adler & Sarstedt, 2021). Other people are psychologically distant from consumers, which might affect the predictions consumers make about them. Similarly, another stream of

research has documented how the presence of others can lead consumers to exhibit more egocentric biases, such as the spotlight effect (Roy et al., 2021). The extent to which commonness fallacy is related to these egocentric biases needs further investigation.

Our research also contributes to two important substantive domains for researchers and practitioners. The gift-giving literature has documented that people systematically mispredict the preferences of gift recipients (Givi & Das, 2021; Givi, 2020). While our context was not gift-giving, the findings have implications for this area of research. For instance, consumers might believe that others would like to receive a common rather than a less common item as a gift. This would be true even if they would have chosen the less common item for themselves. Researchers can also examine other attributes of gifts using the paradigm outlined in our research. For instance, consumers can choose between a material and an experiential gift (Puentes-Díaz & Cavazos-Arroyo, 2021). Researchers can examine if social projection and features of the gift might lead consumers to mispredict gift-recipients' preferences.

Finally, another related substantive area is managers' predictions of consumers' choices. Research in this area suggests that managers often anchor on their own preferences when predicting consumer choice (Hattula et al., 2015; Herzog et al., 2021). Imagine a manager designing a product assortment or predicting the inventory requirements for the next sales cycle. Our findings suggest that even if managers don't rely on their own preferences in such decisions, they would still overpredict consumers' preferences for the frequently consumed items. Therefore, when designing interventions (e.g., Herzog et al., 2021), it is not sufficient to address egocentric biases. To increase prediction accuracy, such interventions should jointly address multiple sources of prediction errors over and above egocentric sources. Future research can examine the effective design of such interventions.

### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on Open Science Framework via this link: <https://osf.io/74vdj/>

### ORCID

Shankha Basu  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4457-4247>

Jingyu Zhu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8060-8064>

Krishna Savani  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6934-1917>

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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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