

Willful Ignorance



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Why might we expect attribute avoidance?

■ **Omission Bias**

- (Baron & Ritov 1994; Ritov & Baron 1999; Tanner & Medin 2003)

■ **Tradeoff difficulty/conflict**

- Choice dependant on goals (Bettman, Luce & Payne 1998)
- Ethical attributes (Baron & Spranca 1997; Irwin 1999; Irwin & Baron 2001)
- Task-induced negative affect (Luce 1998; Shiv & Fedorikhin 1999; Irwin 1999)

■ **Self-regulation**

- “Want” and “Should” selves (Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, & Wade-Benzoni 1998)

Studies
1 and 2 :

Request Information

<

Use Information

Study 3:

Explicit Choice
Made

<

No Explicit
Choice Made

Study 4 and 5:

Recall Ethical Attribute as
Unfavorable

<

Recall as
Favorable



Study 1: Method

- 221 Subjects (Between subjects)
 - Blank matrix or conjoint
- Shopping for wooden desk and chair set
- 4 Attributes
 - Workmanship (designer, medium, low)
 - Comfort (excellent, medium low)
 - Type of Wood (tree farm, rainforest, combination farm/rainforest)
 - Price (\$750, \$550, \$350)
- Likelihood of purchase
- Dependent Measures: Request vs. Use of the attribute
 - Definition of avoidance

Study 1 – blank matrix

Desk	A: Workmanship	B: Comfort	C: Wood Type	D: Price
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				

Study 1 – Attribute listings

1. Excellent Workmanship
2. Medium Workmanship
3. Medium Workmanship
4. Medium Workmanship
5. Medium Workmanship
6. Excellent Workmanship
7. Excellent Workmanship
8. Medium Workmanship
9. Excellent Workmanship
10. Excellent Workmanship
11. Excellent Workmanship
12. Medium Workmanship
13. Excellent Workmanship
14. Medium Workmanship
15. Medium Workmanship
16. Excellent Workmanship

1. Wood type = rainforest wood
2. Wood type = tree farm wood
3. Wood type = tree farm wood
4. Wood type = rainforest wood
5. Wood type = tree farm wood
6. Wood type = rainforest wood
7. Wood type = tree farm wood
8. Wood type = rainforest wood
9. Wood type = rainforest wood
10. Wood type = rainforest wood
11. Wood type = tree farm wood
12. Wood type = tree farm wood
13. Wood type = tree farm wood
14. Wood type = rainforest wood
15. Wood type = rainforest wood
16. Wood type = tree farm wood

Study 1 – Conjoint examples

1. This desk set is of designer quality, is very comfortable, is made from wood grown on a tree farm and costs \$750
2. This desk set is quite low quality, yet is very comfortable, is made from wood taken from an endangered tropical rainforest and costs \$350
3. This desk set is of excellent quality although it isn't the most comfortable, it is made from wood grown on a tree farm and costs \$350

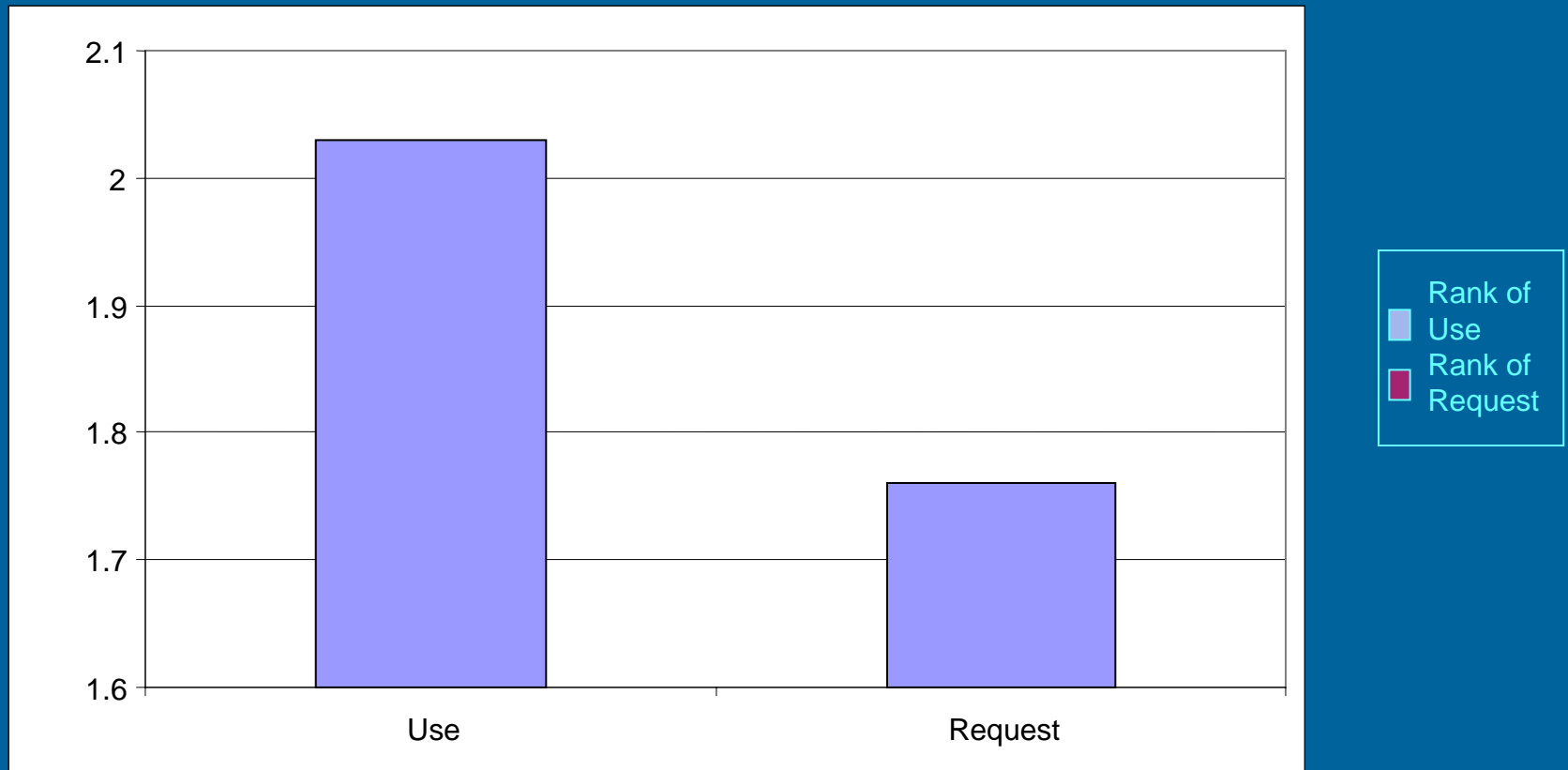
Study 1 and 2: Ethical Attribute Concern Questions

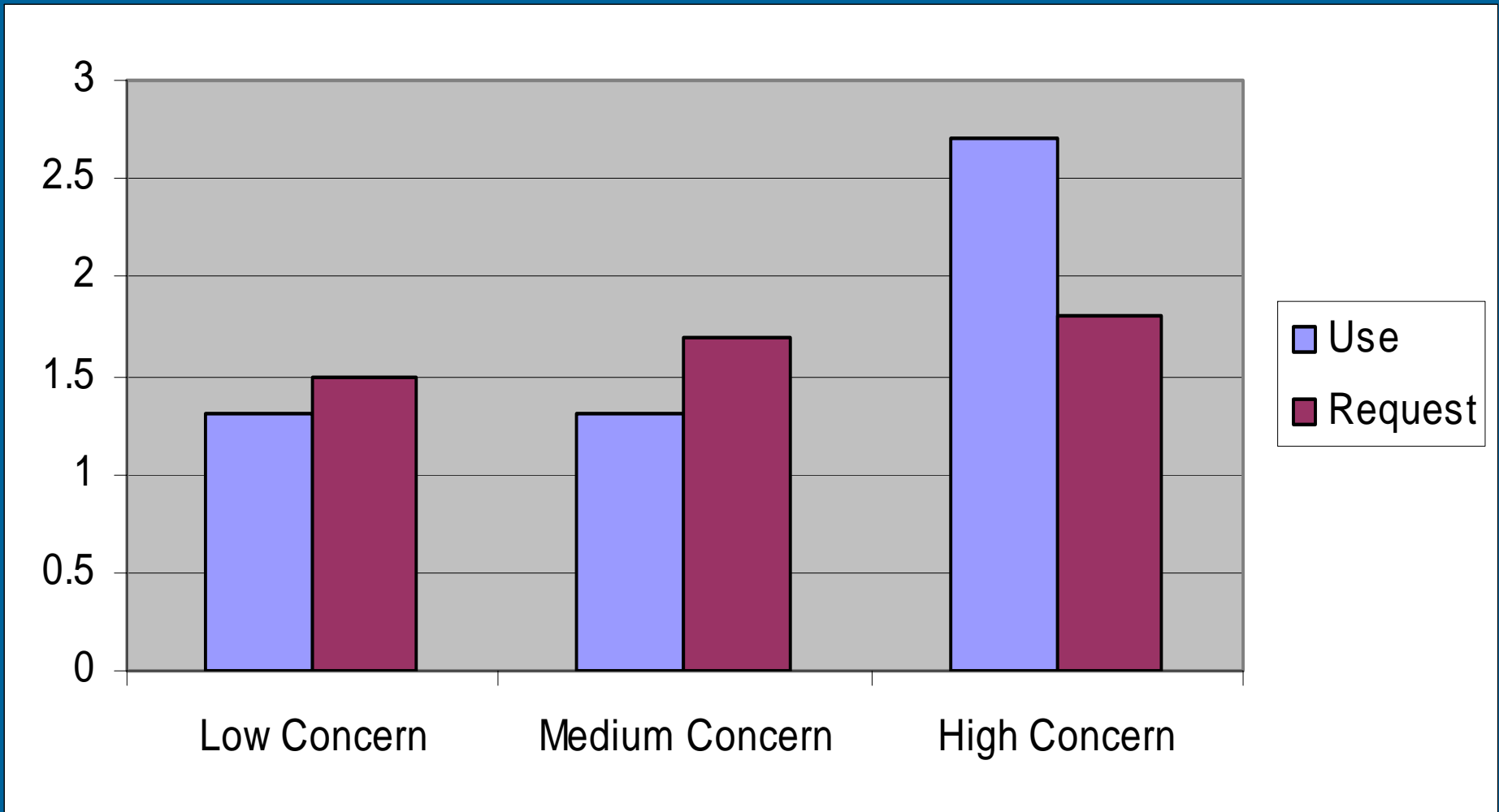
- Which of the following best represents your view about rainforest wood?
 - Their use should be determined by the free market.
 - Protection of the rainforests should be balanced against market values.
 - Protection of the rainforests should be absolute.

- How do you feel about using products made by cutting rainforests?
 - I would not do this no matter what I gained from it.
 - I would do it if I saved enough money.
 - I would happily do it.

Rank of attribute (higher = used more, requested sooner)

Comparison of Attribute 'Use' to 'Request' in Study 1 (Between Subjects)





More avoidance if care more. Same interaction with wood importance.

Study 2: Method

- 182 Subjects (**Within subjects**)
 - Blank matrix followed by conjoint
- Shopping for wooden desk and chair set
- 4 Attributes
 - Workmanship (designer, medium, low)
 - Comfort (excellent, medium low)
 - Type of Wood (tree farm, rainforest, combination farm/rainforest)
 - Price (\$750, \$550, \$350)
- Likelihood of purchase
- Dependent Measures: ‘Request’ and ‘Use’ of Attribute Information

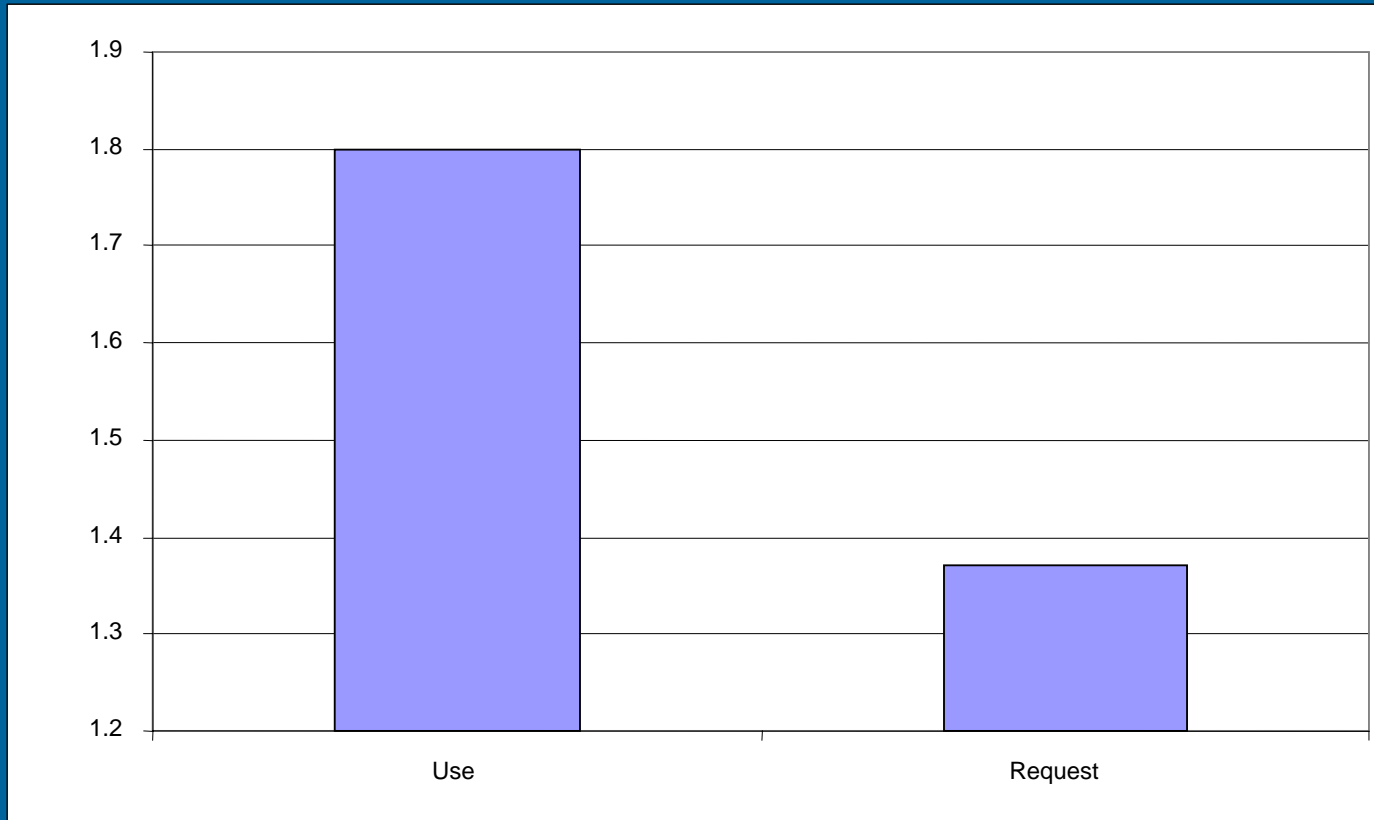
Study 1 and 2: Ethical Attribute Concern Questions

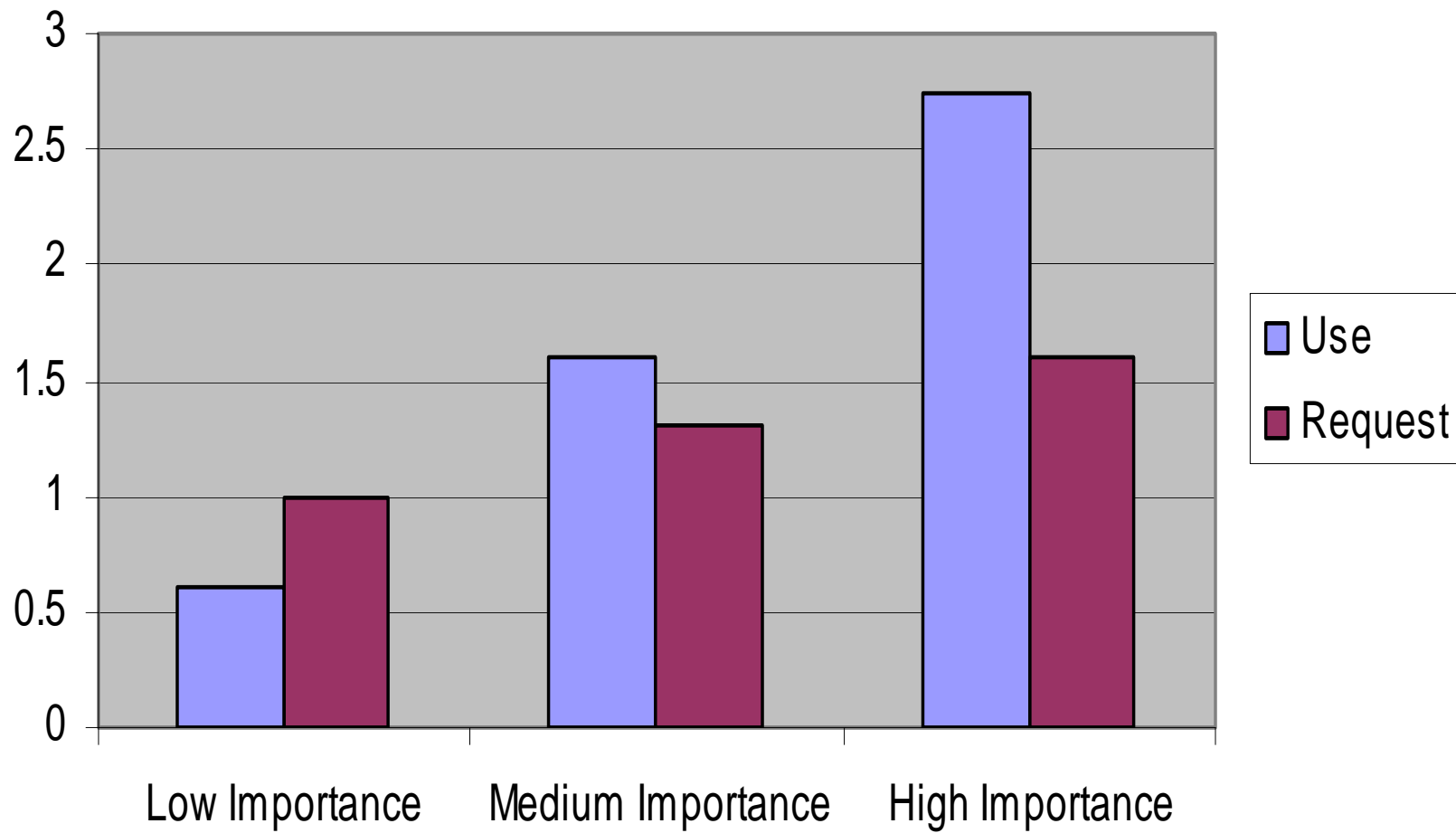
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 - Their use should be determined by the free market.
 - Protection of the rainforests should be balanced against market values.
 - Protection of the rainforests should be absolute.

- How do you feel about using products made by cutting rainforests?
 - I would not do this no matter what I gained from it.
 - I would do it if I saved enough money.
 - I would happily do it.

Comparison of Attribute 'Use' to 'Request' in Study 2 (Within Subjects)

Rank of attribute (higher = used more, requested sooner)





Again, more avoidance if care more.
(Same interaction with concern)

Study 3

- Actual choice versus just viewing the items
- Preferring one item to another
- Giving them a reason to avoid (or not avoid)

Study 3: stimuli



Phone A



Phone B

Pretest 62 subjects (1-8 scale)

Phone A, $M = 1.66$

Phone B, $M 6.82$

Study 3: Method

- 192 subjects
- 2 x 2 study (initial choice/no choice) x (information offered on unattractive/attractive phone)

Cellular phones can vary on dimensions other than the features we usually associate with them. Please read the following explanations of these dimensions and then help us by telling us how well-worded each explanation is.

- WARRANTY

Some companies have begun offering warranties, lasting from one to two years, on their phones. This warranty is some indication of how long the cell phone will last.

- LABOR

Some cell phone companies have factories in less developed countries. Some of these factories employ children under the age of 12. This is not found to affect the product quality. The children work 8 to 12 hour days.

- DELIVERY TIME

This cell phone is being offered online. Sometimes the cell phones are in stock and can be sent within one week and sometimes the cell phones are not in stock and need to be ordered before they can be sent to the customer, taking up to three weeks.

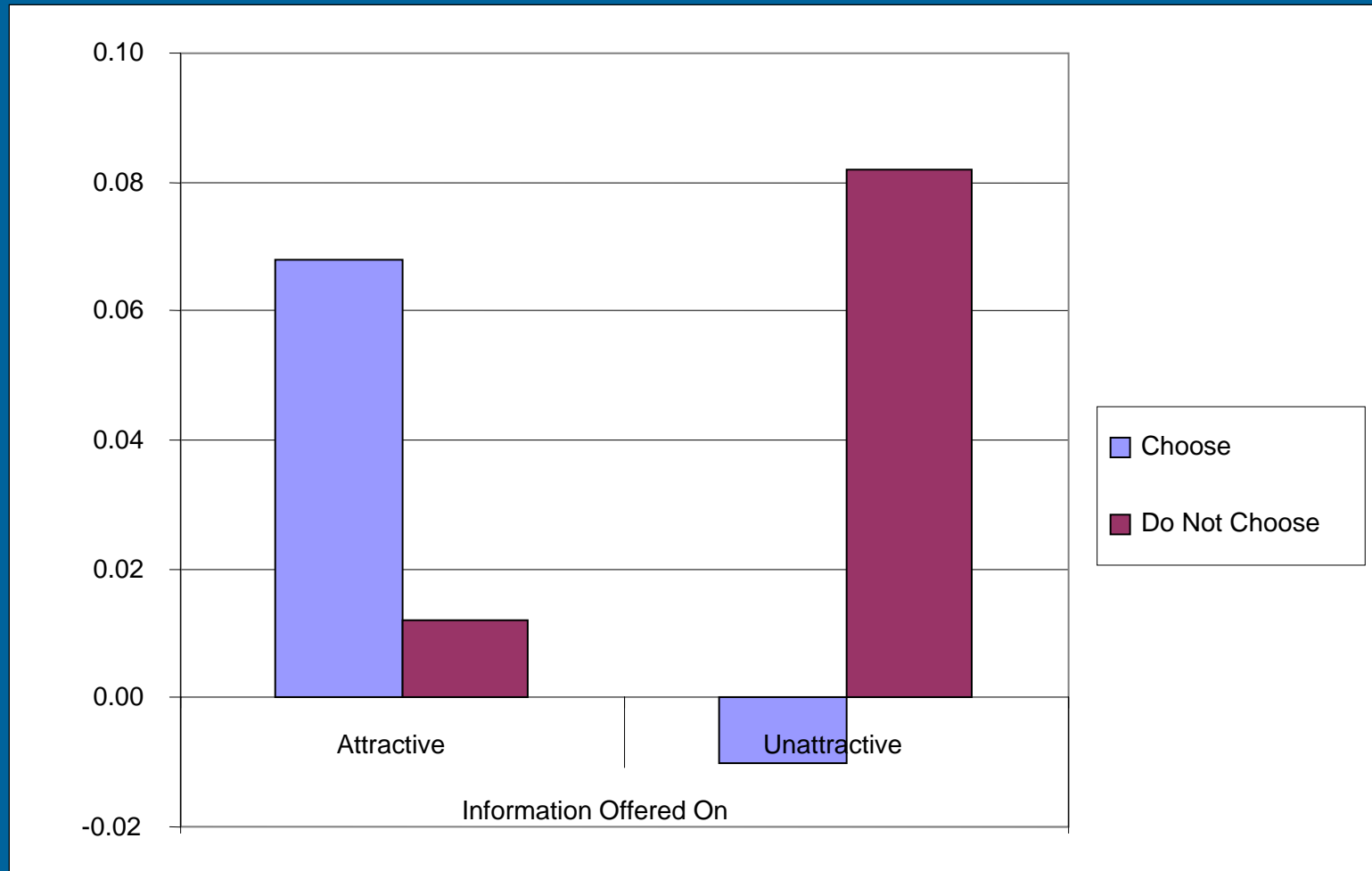
- There is now some additional information available about one of these cellular phones, Phone A. If you would like to learn more, about cell phone A regarding the issues described above, you can open the corresponding stapled sheet (attached to the back of this study) and read the information inside of it.
- You can open any number of sheets: none, one, two, or three; however time is limited so if you choose to open any, please open those most important to you first.
- Remember, there is no right or wrong answer to any of these questions.

Study 3: Ethical Attribute Concern

- What are your feelings regarding child labor (the employment in manufacturing plants, of children ages 6-12, who are paid a few cents an hour)?
 - Children should be used as workers as often as possible, as they are often a cheap form of labor, thereby reducing the price of the products that are manufactured.
 - Children should be used as workers, but only under guidelines for number of hours worked in one day and should receive pay equal to that of adults.
 - Children under the age of 12 should not be allowed to work in manufacturing plants.

Study 3: When do people avoid labor information?

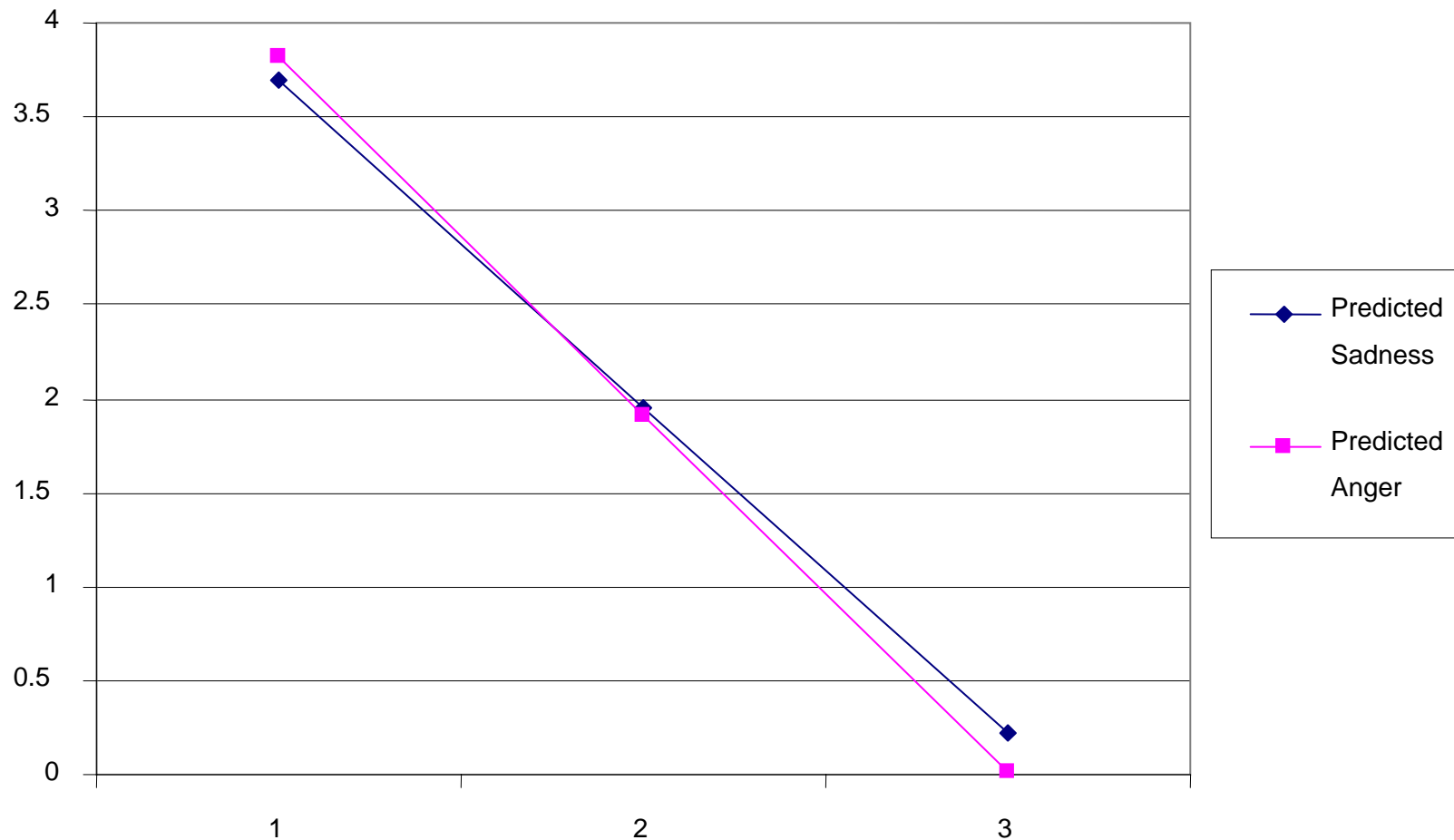
Avoidance



This result is stronger for those who care more, as in the other two studies..

Why Avoid?

Avoidance Reduces Anger and Sadness



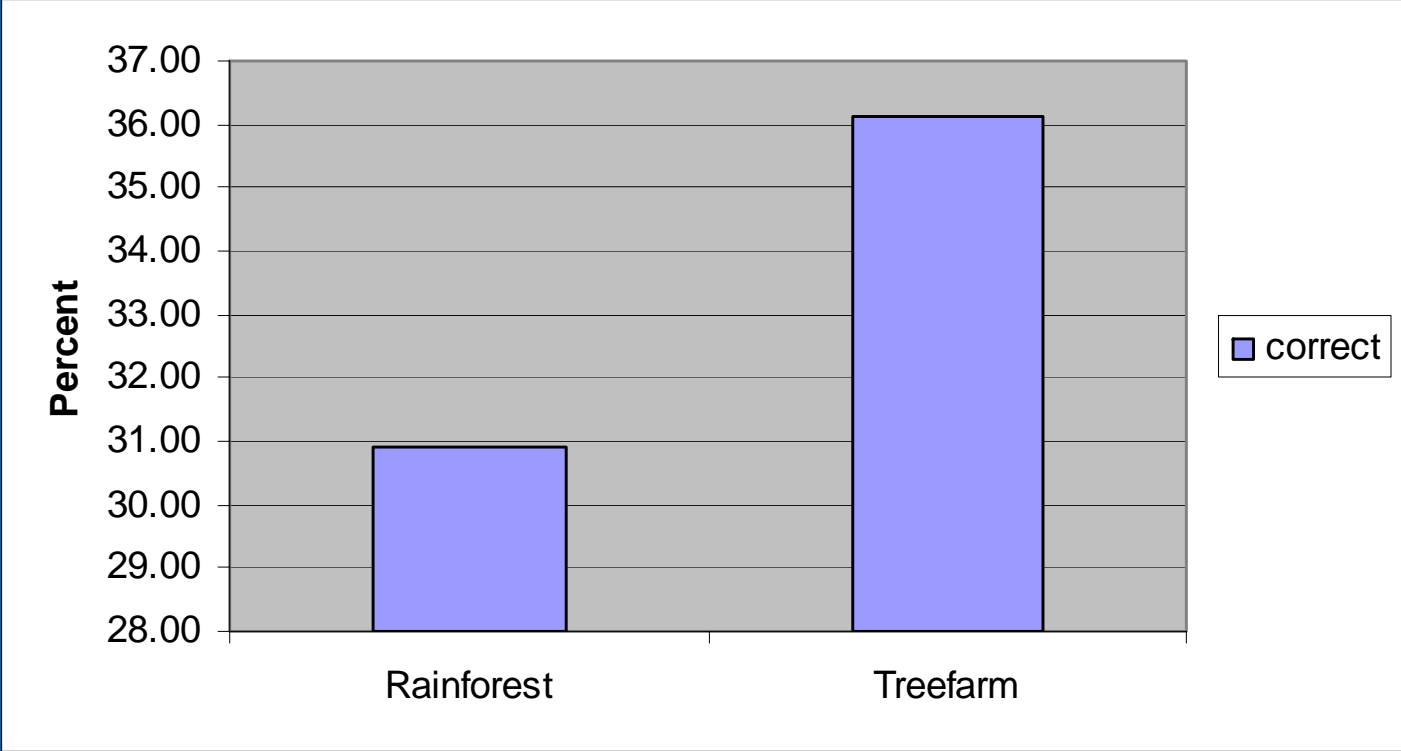
Conclusions and Practical Implications: Attribute Request Studies

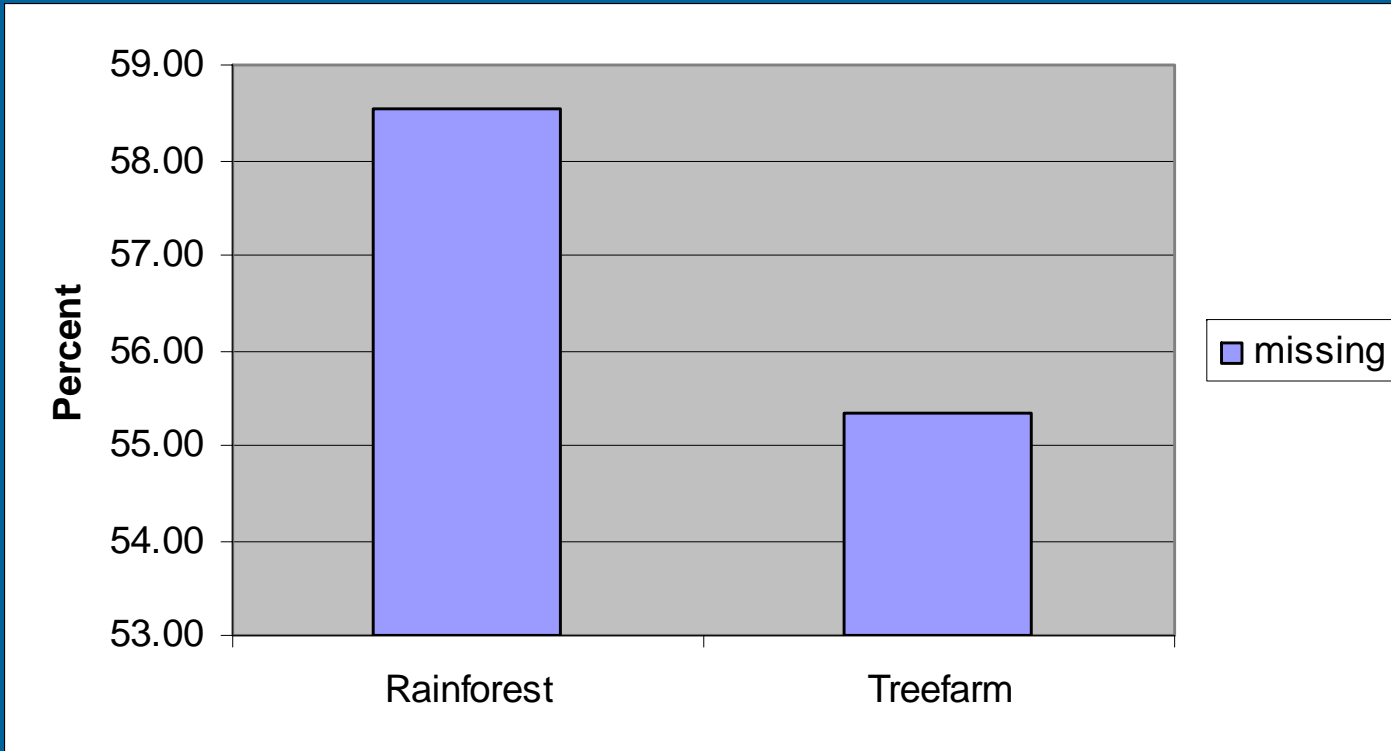
- Ethical attribute information is not often readily available
- If people have to ask for it, they may not
 - Especially if they care a great deal about the issue
 - And especially if they are
 - in a purchasing situation, and
 - like the product
- This could help explain why market share for products with ethical attributes may not reflect actual underlying values

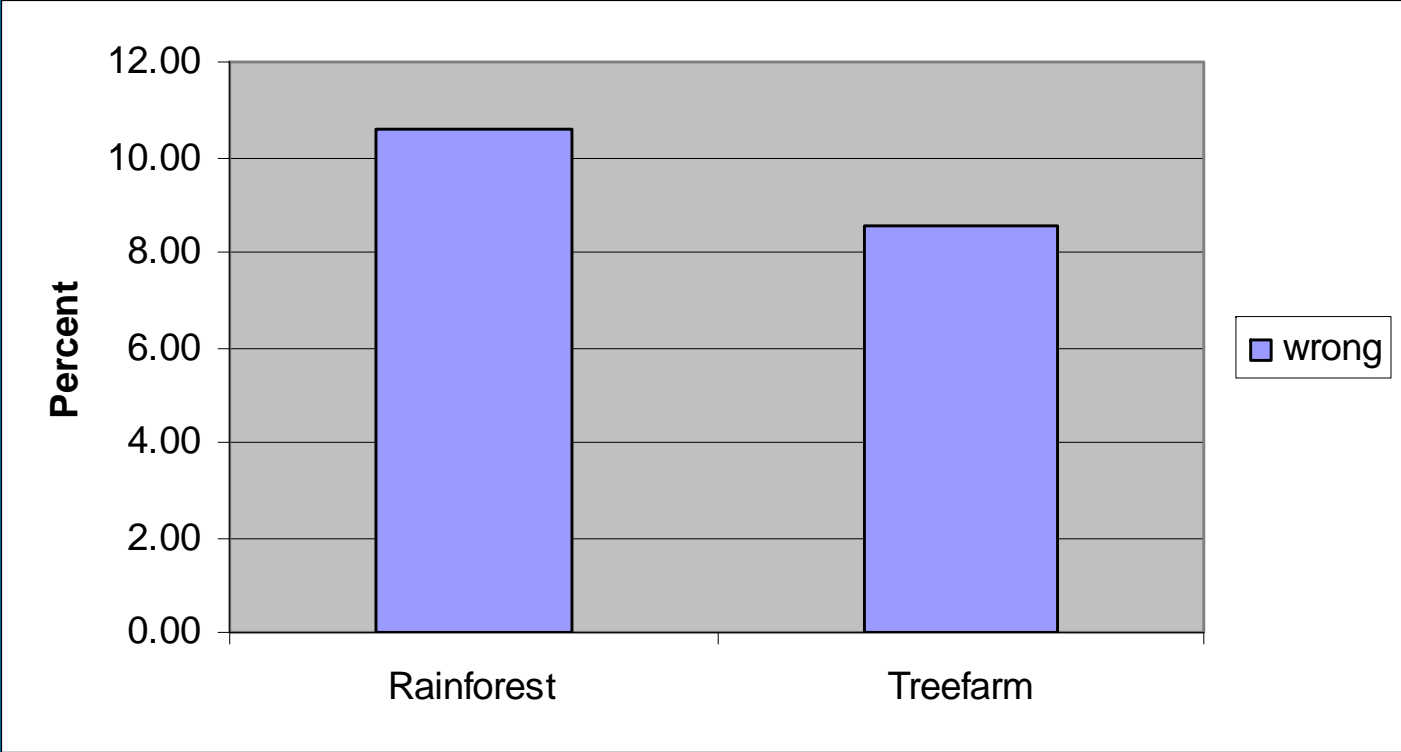
Motivated Memory for Attribute Information:

Study 4 (not controlling for storage)

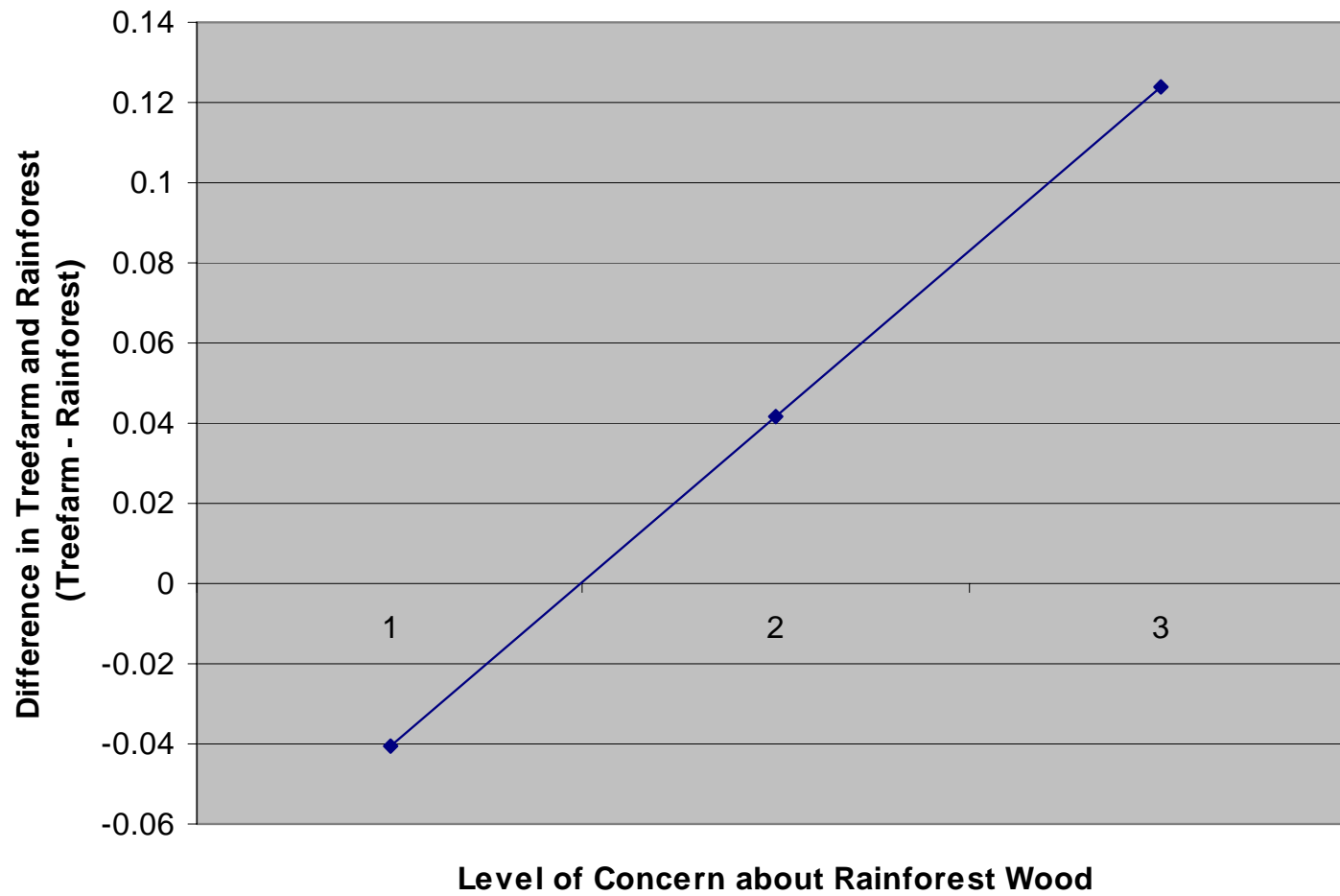
- 261 Subjects
- Viewed paragraphs of full matrix of desk information and rated the readability of the scenarios After a distracter task, free recall of the desk information
- Research question: Do they forget rainforest wood more than they forget tree farm wood?
 - Does this forgetting depend on concern for rainforest wood?







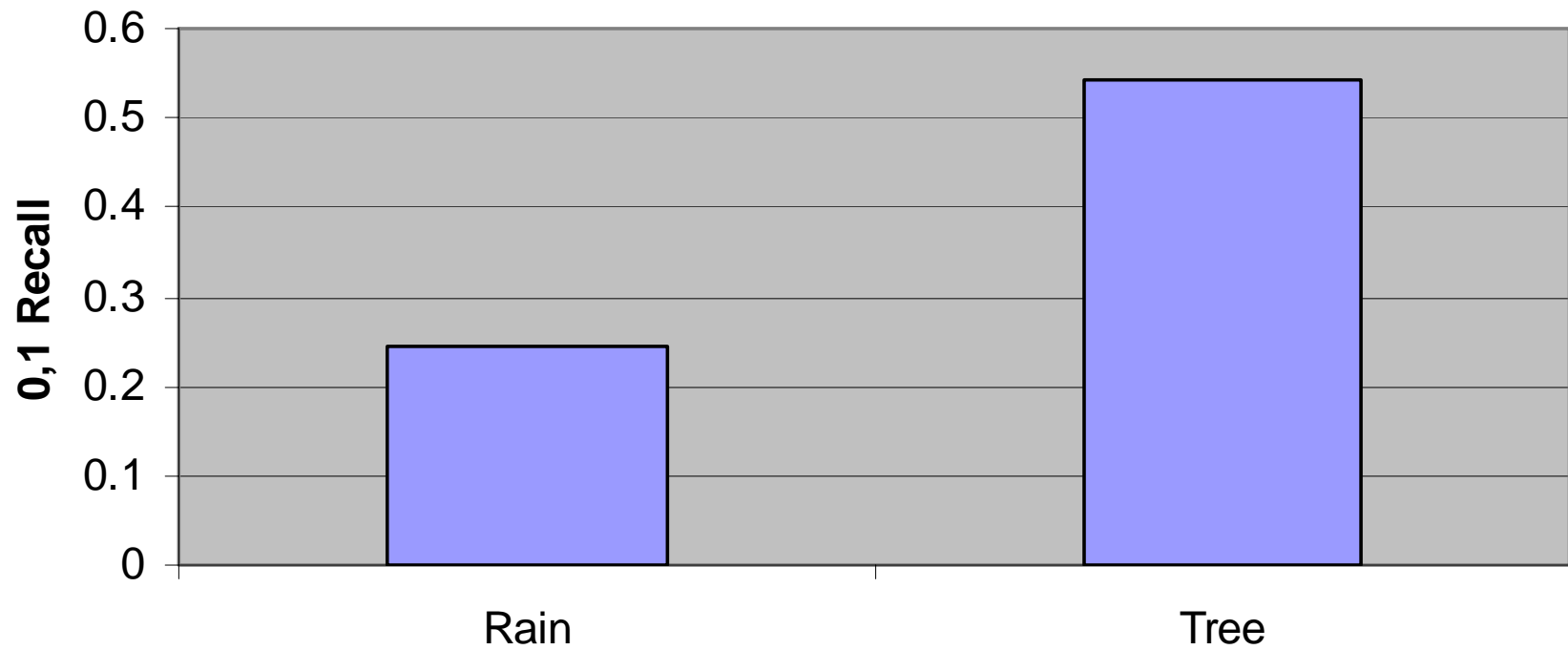
Motivated Forgetting for Wood Source by Concern



Study 5: Controlling for Storage

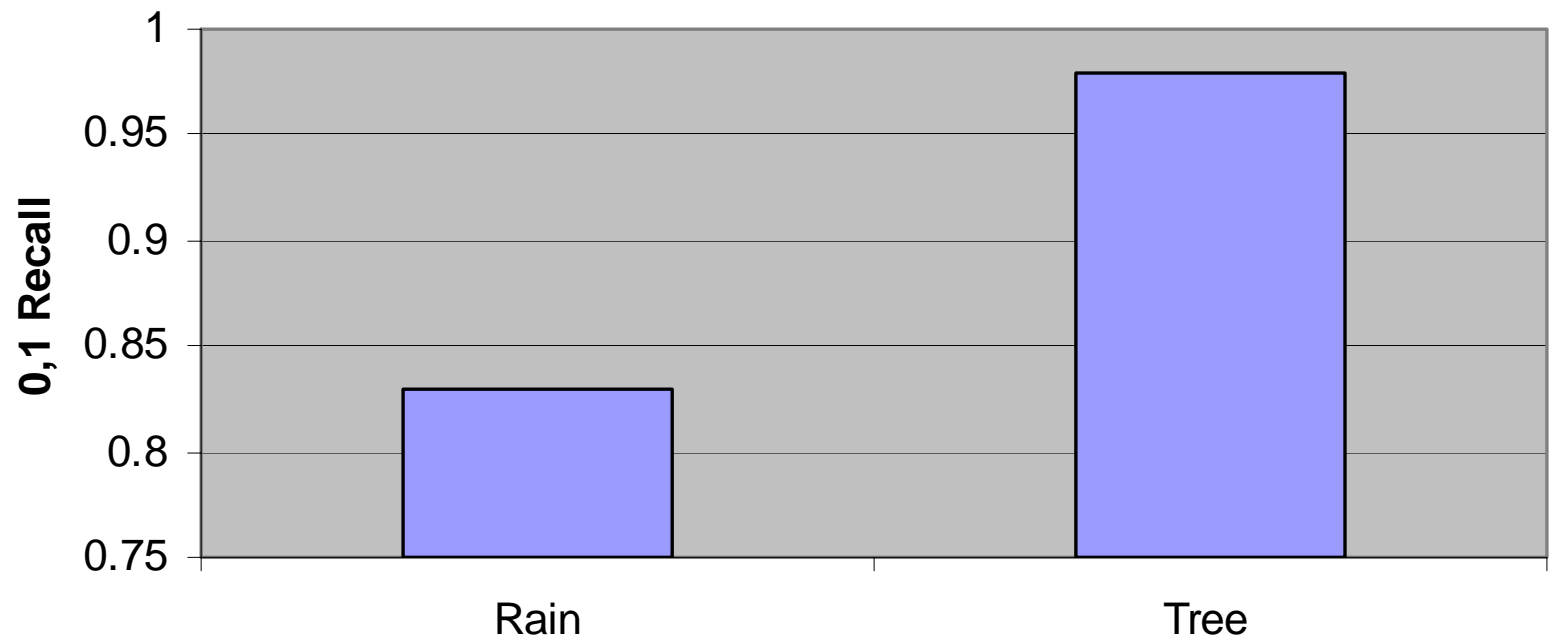
- Phase 1: Read scenarios and rate for readability
- Choose 2 desks from a cup and memorize them until get them right (3 trials)
 - This allows between-subject (rr vs. tt) and within-subject (rt or tr) tests.
- Distracter task
- Cued recall of their two desks, plus whatever they recalled of the other desks

Cued Recall (all desks)

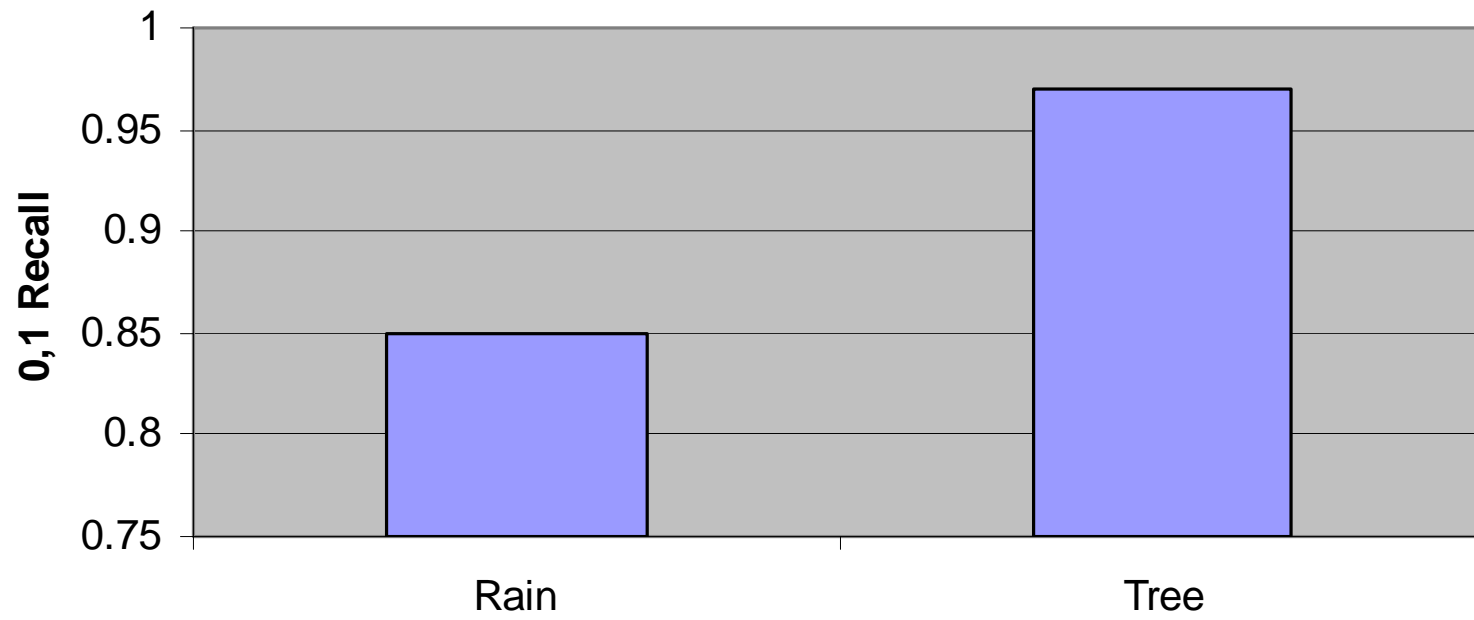


Also significant if code 1, 0 (wrong and missing)
F's of 74 and 47 respectively.

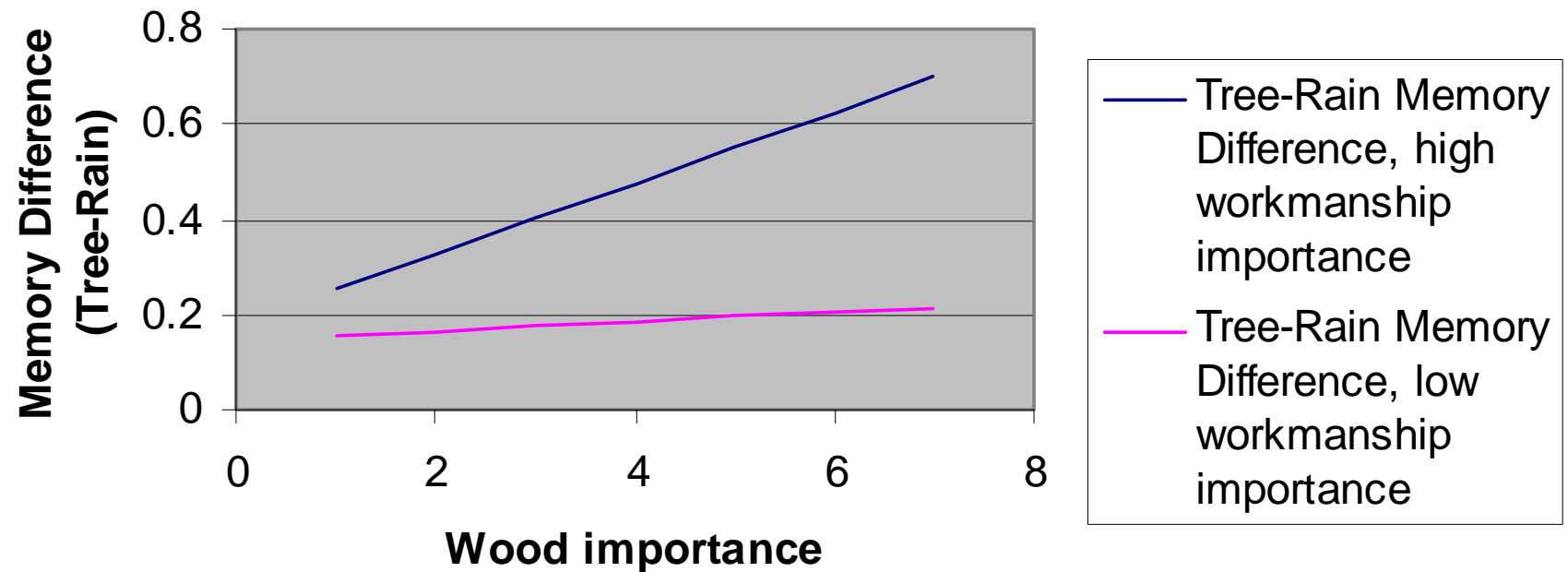
Within-Subject Recall



Between-subject Test



Interaction between wood and workmanship importance



Summary: Memory Experiments

- Memory appears to be motivated by willful ignorance
 - Storage: Don't store unpleasant information
 - Retrieval: Will not retrieve the information if it is in conflict with something appealing
- As with attribute request patterns, motivated memory is driven by the importance of the issue
 - In the opposite direction we might expect given commonsense expectations

Future Directions

- Should/want relationships and attribute avoidance
 - Regulatory focus, approach/avoidance, goals
- Nonlinear functions (what about the endpoints?)
- The loci of avoidance

