EXPLORING USER MOTIVATIONS BEHIND iOS APP TRACKING TRANSPARENCY DECISIONS
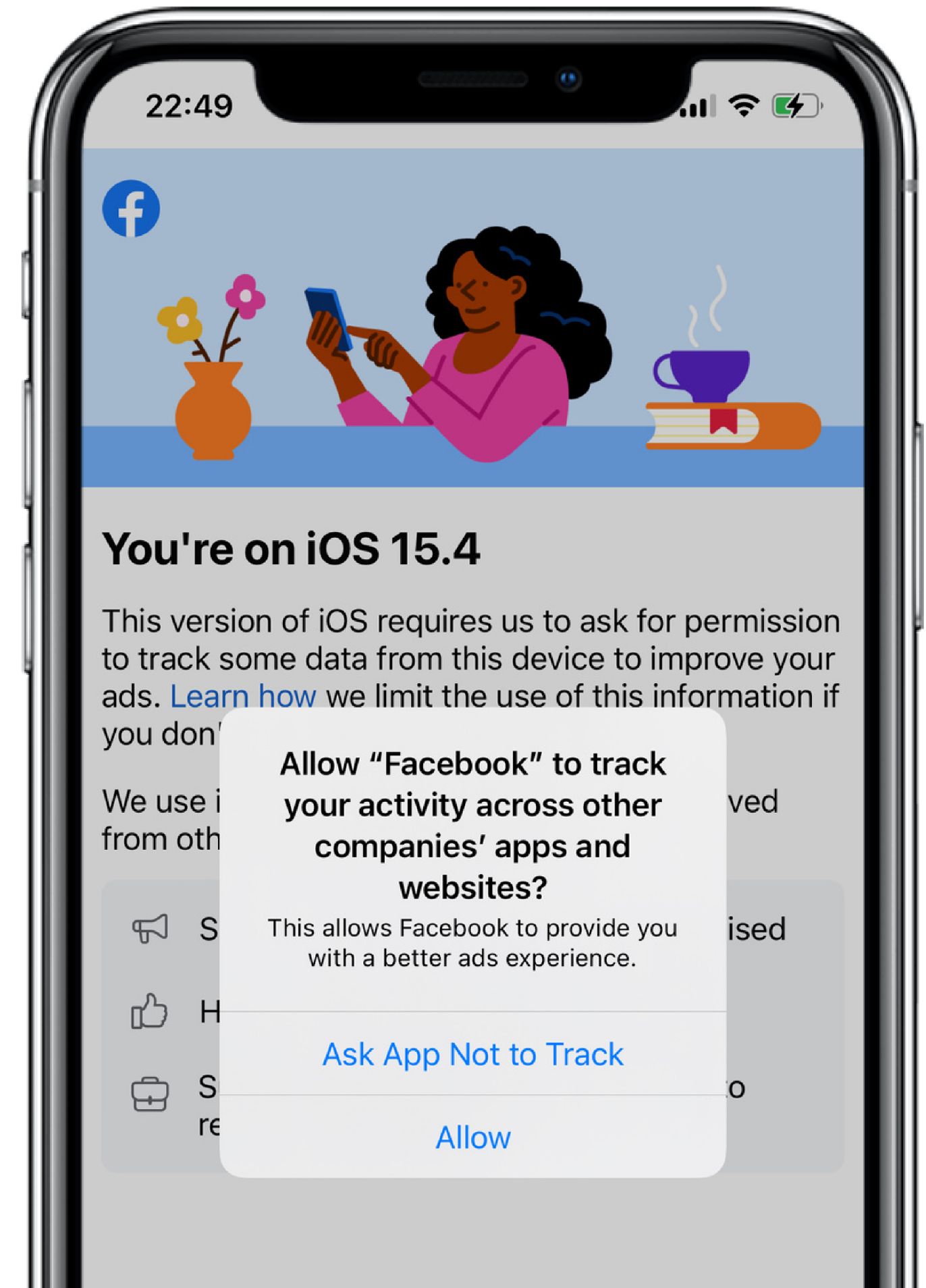
Hannah J Hutton & David A Ellis

University of Bath, UK

APP TRACKING

Allow apps to track your activity on other apps for advertising purposes

You'll get better targeted ads on that app in exchange for your activity data

THIS STUDY

- Is the rate of tracking acceptance correlated with privacy concern?

- What factors affect the rate of tracking acceptance?

Collected:
- tracking decisions
- self-reported reason why tracking had been accepted/rejected for each app

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- Mean age: 33 years old, range 18-75
- 68% female, 30% male, 1% non-binary, 1% prefer not to say
- 71% >= undergraduate degree

WHAT FACTORS AFFECT TRACKING DECISIONS?

DOES PRIVACY CONCERN MATTER?

No correlation between reported privacy concern and rate of tracking acceptance

Need to look at reasons why users accept or reject tracking to understand why this is happening
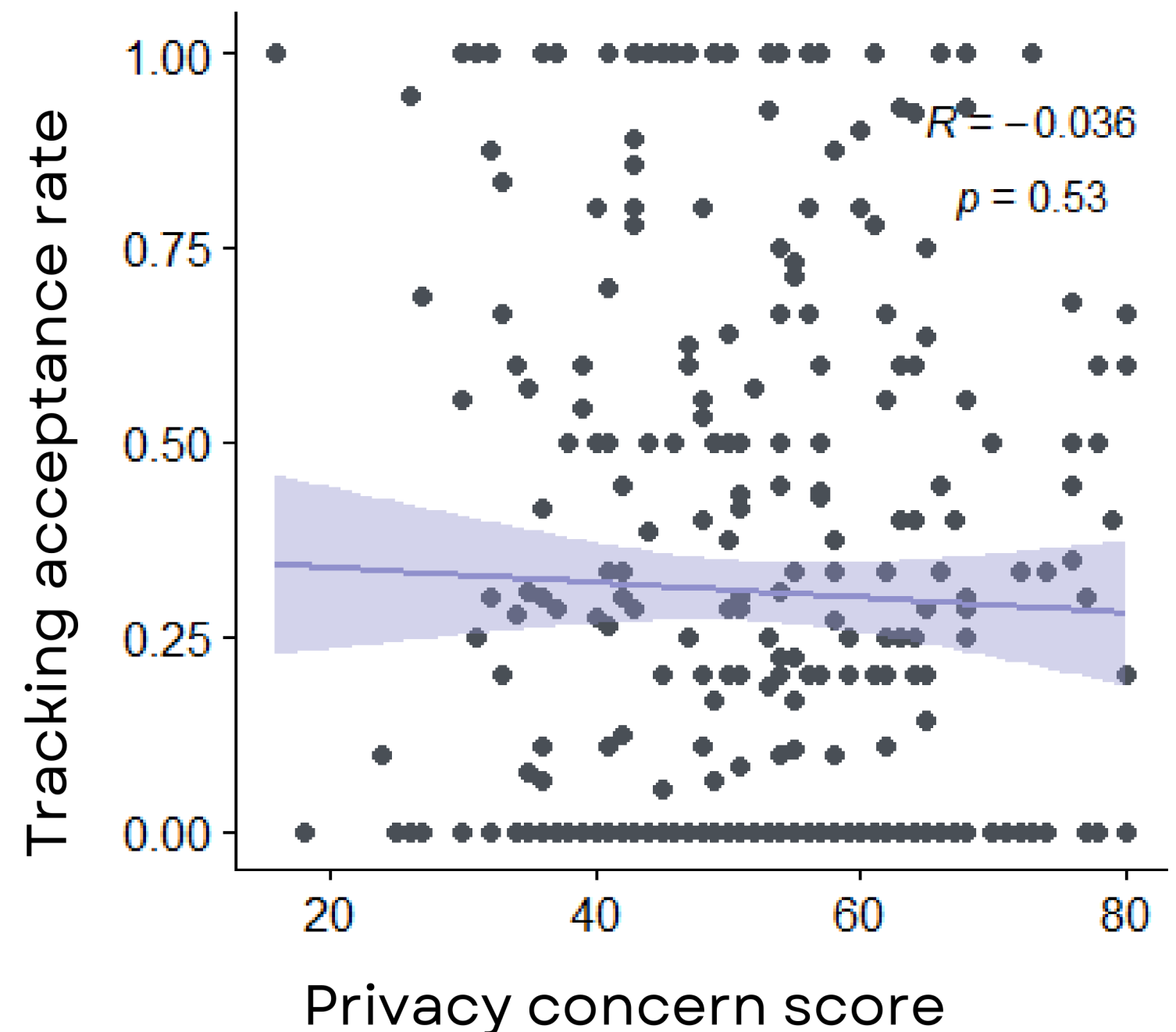
PRIVACY/SECURITY CONCERNS

158 participants
50.64%

Significant difference between this group and the other participants for privacy concern and tracking acceptance

"It feels like an invasion of privacy"

MISCONCEPTIONS

134 participants
43.27%

Lots of responses suggested that participants were unclear about how tracking works

"It needs my location to show me local places"

Many believed they needed to accept tracking for the app to work, especially those who believed they were sharing location data

76 participants
24.36%

TRACKING BENEFITS

95 participants
30.45%

Some participants were interested in getting something back from tracking

Most of them didn't realise that the only thing they get in return is more relevant ads though
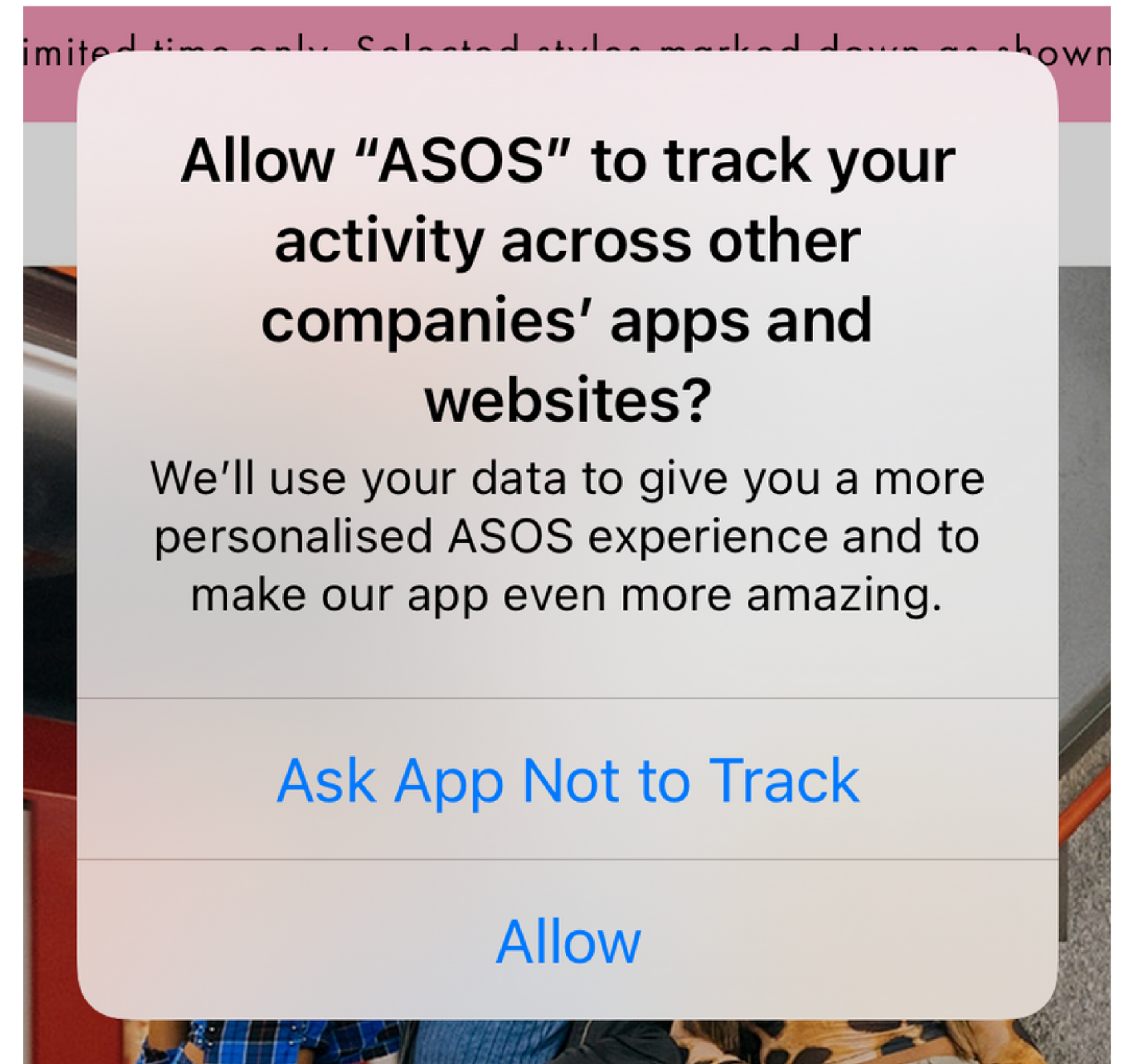
"Some targeted ads are good"

THE FUTURE OF PRIVACY DECISION MAKING

NEED FOR CLARITY

Tracking requests are not readily understood

"Tracking" is an overloaded term which confused participants

Some request prompts are vague or misleading

Allow "ASOS" to track your activity across other companies' apps and websites?
We'll use your data to give you a more personalised ASOS experience and to make our app even more amazing.

Ask App Not to Track

Allow

IS IT A PARADOX?

The Privacy Paradox states that people claim to value their privacy but act in ways that actively violate their privacy

Lack of correlation between privacy concern score and tracking acceptance rate doesn't mean the paradox is right - just that people are being misled by the request prompts
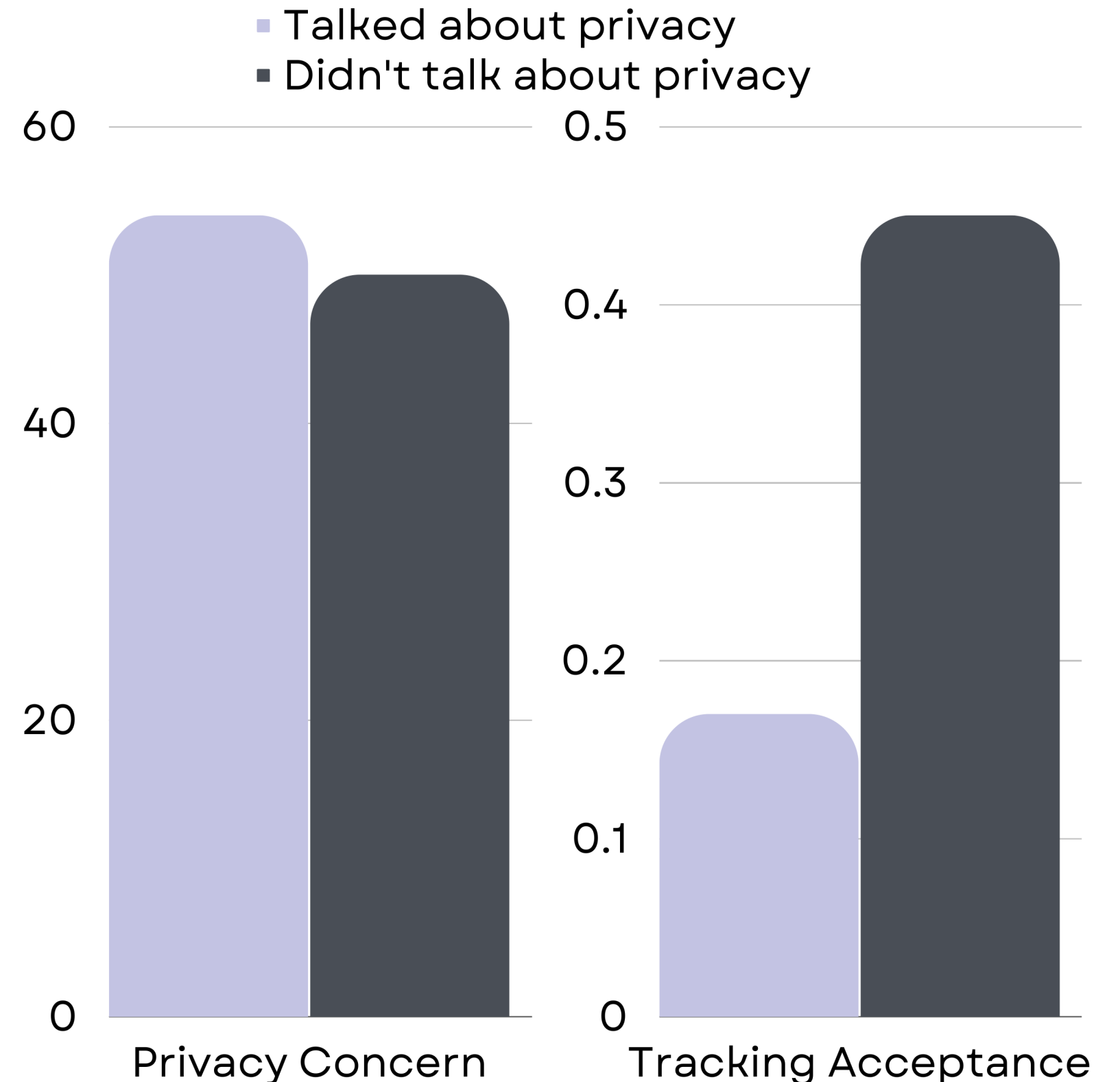
CONCLUSION

- Giving users the option to make their own privacy decisions is a great step forward

- More work needs to be done to improve user understanding of tracking requests

THANK YOU

@HJ_Hutton
hjh53@bath.ac.uk

@davidaellis
dae30@bath.ac.uk

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