Mindbugs: Understanding Implicit Bias

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Illusions

Apparent Motion

Thatcher Illusion (Thompson, 1980)

McGurk Effect (McGurk, 1996)

Checkerboard (Adelson, 1995)
Implicit Association Test
(Greenwald et al., 1998)
Implicit Association Test (IAT)

Block | Left | Right
--- | --- | ---
1 | Male | Female
2 | Family | Career
3 | Male or Family | Female or Career
4 | Career | Family
5 | Male or Career | Female or Family
**Race** ('Black - White' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of European and African origin. It indicates that most Americans have an automatic preference for white over black.

**Weight** ('Fat - Thin' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of people who are obese and people who are thin. It often reveals an automatic preference for thin people relative to fat people.

**Presidents** ('Presidential Popularity' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize photos of Barack Obama and one or more previous presidents.

**Asian American** ('Asian - European American' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Asian-American faces, and images of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.

**Age** ('Young - Old' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish old from young faces. This test often indicates that Americans have automatic preference for young over old.

**Gender - Science**. This IAT often reveals a relative link between liberal arts and females and between science and males.

**Weapons** ('Weapons - Harmless Objects' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Black faces, and images of weapons or harmless objects.

**Gender - Career**. This IAT often reveals a relative link between family and females and between career and males.

**Sexuality** ('Gay - Straight' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish words and symbols representing gay and straight people. It often reveals an automatic preference for straight relative to gay people.

**Arab-Muslim** ('Arab Muslim - Other People' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish names that are likely to belong to Arab-Muslims versus people of other nationalities or religions.

**Disability** ('Disabled - Abled' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize symbols representing abled and disabled individuals.

**Religion** ('Religions' IAT). This IAT requires some familiarity with religious terms from various world religions.

**Skin-tone** ('Light Skin - Dark Skin' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize light and dark-skinned faces. It often reveals an automatic preference for light-skin relative to dark-skin.
Overall Results

N = 846,020 Project Implicit Participants
Three Simple Ideas
(that are difficult to believe)

- Much of mental life occurs outside of conscious awareness
- Mental life that occurs outside of conscious awareness can contradict our conscious beliefs
- Behavior is shaped by thoughts intended and unintended (implicit bias)
Disparity Studies

Implicit Bias and Health Care (Green et al., 2007)

Implicit Bias and Police Shooting (Correll et al., 2007)

Academic Resume StudY (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012)
Mitigating Implicit Bias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bias is influential when...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information is ambiguous, complex, and/or incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making criteria are unclear</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To mitigate the effects of bias we could...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and prioritize evaluation criteria in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge all candidates in comparison to criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know which factors are related to performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mitigating Implicit Bias

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Bias is influential when...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decisions must be made quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One is tired, stressed, or otherwise depleted</td>
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<tr>
<th>To mitigate the effects of bias we could...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slow down; calm down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan to evaluate during your best time of day</td>
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Mitigating Implicit Bias

Bias is influential when...

Groups of likeminded people conduct evaluations

To mitigate the effects of bias we could...

- Actively search for counterevidence for decisions
- Assign diverse committees
- Avoid sharing evaluations with others prematurely
# Mitigating Implicit Bias

**Bias is influential when...**

We are overconfident in our own objectivity

**To mitigate the effects of bias we could...**

- Honestly consider your practices; be humble
- Create your practices with the idea that you are biased

**Questions to ask yourself:**

- Have this person's accomplishments been attributed?
- Are your standards applied consistently?
- Are you analyzing potential or actual success?
- Are stereotypes about family or "fitting in" at play?
Project Implicit

PI Research Site

Academic Site