How Well Can Participants Predict Their Automatic Attitudes Towards Close Others?

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Introduction

•Automatic attitudes are our implicit or 'gut' feelings and reactions. Our explicit ones are the ones we consciously and explicitly make.
•An implicit measure is an assessment that collects data from spontaneous reactions.
   •We are using Implicit Association Tests
•Prior research suggests that automatic attitudes towards a partner can inform about the success and future of relationships. [1]
•These responses can differ from other self-evaluation methods in research, which brings up questions as to why this is. [2]
•Barring relationships, other research suggests that individuals are able to predict automatic attitudes about general topics. [3]
•Our aim is to investigate how well participants can predict what their automatic attitudes are towards close other pairs (mother vs father; self vs partner, grandfather vs grandmother, and sibling vs best friend.).
•The significance of our research lies in what can be done afterwards by informing people to be more aware of their automatic attitudes to possibly increase relationship satisfaction.
•Our study has a similar format to Morris', but we are adding a more intense emotional factor (close others) and seeing if that affects the ability of participants.

Figure 1: Close Other Examples (left – partner; right – sibling)

Hypotheses
1. Participants can predict their automatic attitudes however not to the same degree as found with general topics because of the added emotional element.
2. We will explore if some close other pairs are better or worse predicted than others.
3. We will explore if the confidence or difficulty in making predictions varies depending on the close other pair prompted.

Methods

Subjects: College students in a romantic relationship Currently we have data collected on 27 participants, (22 female; 5 male) with $M_{age} = 19.7$, $SD_{age} = 1.23$, and $M_{relationship\ duration} = 18.94$ months.

Variables of Interest:
• Participants' predictions of their automatic attitudes toward close others (predicted IAT D-scores)
• Participants' automatic attitudes toward close others (actual IAT D-scores)
• Participant confidence in their predictions
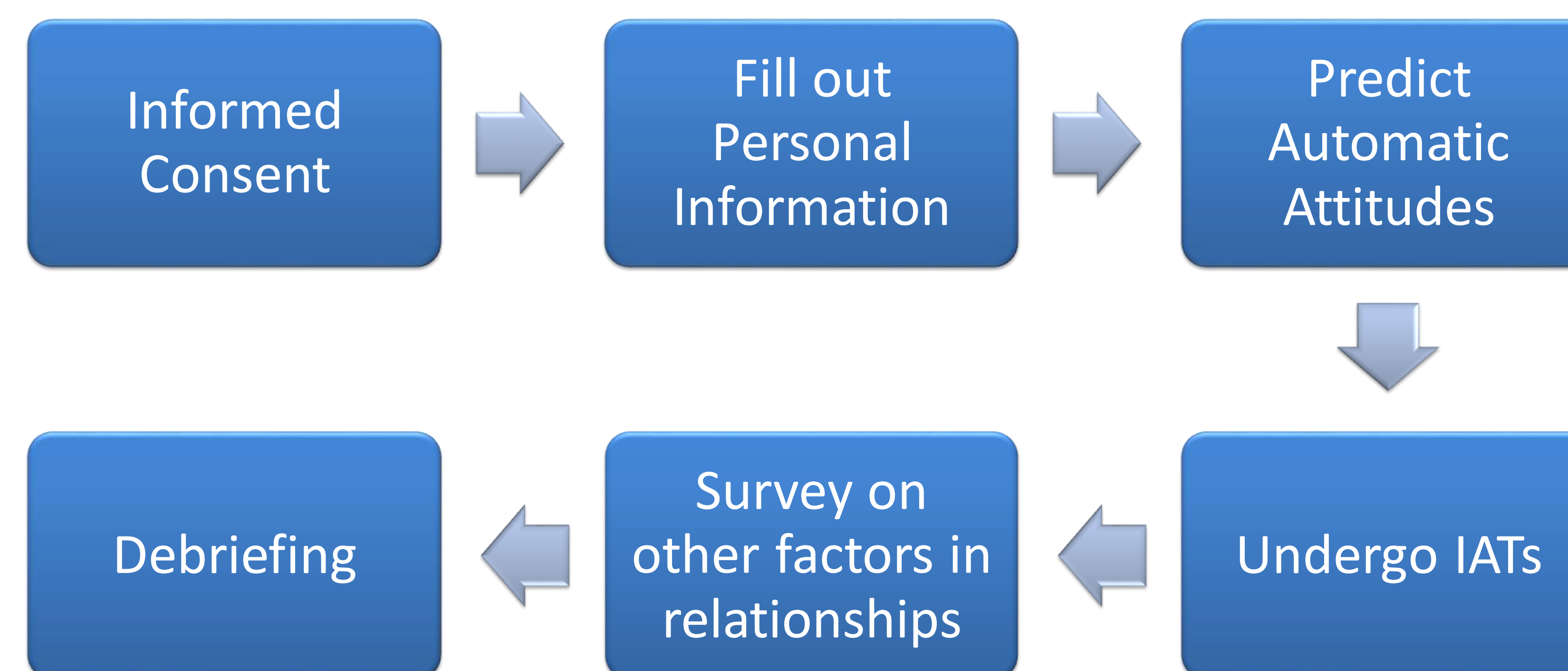• Difficulty of making predictions for participants

Procedure:

Figure 2: Sample IAT Test

Informed Consent → Fill out Personal Information → Predict Automatic Attitudes → Undergo IATs → Survey on other factors in relationships → Debriefing

Results

1. Overall, we have found a moderate correlation between predictions and IAT scores ($r = .40$, $p < .001$).

2. When comparing specific close other pairs, apart from "Self vs Partner" ($r = .26$, $p = .239$), all other close other pairs have a Pearson correlation of ranging from .37 to .44, with all $ps < .080$. Considering this, no significant distinctions can be drawn.

3. In addition, no significant differences were found when comparing confidence ($F = 0.84$, $p = 0.473$) or difficulty ($F = .07$, $p = .972$) between the close other pairs.

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		Dscore	Prediction
1. Dscore	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
2. Prediction	Pearson's r	0.397	—
	p-value	< .001	—

Figure 3: JASP correlation calculation

Discussion

• With this preliminary data, we suggest that people possess the ability to predict their automatic attitudes.
• No significant data separated these results from previous papers, suggesting the emotional element may not be impactful.
• Additionally, although there is a slight difference with the self vs partner prediction set compared to the others, there is no significant difference in the confidence or difficulty of prediction.
• The fact that people may be aware of their automatic attitudes suggests there could be ways to better understand and regulate said attitudes in their relationships.
• The study is not yet complete, so hopefully future results continue to explain and demonstrate what we have already seen.
• These results provide a basis for further research into our understanding of automatic attitudes, and possibly in how being made aware of them could affect relationship functioning and satisfaction

References

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3. Morris, A., & Kurdi, B. (2023). Awareness of implicit attitudes: Large-scale investigations of mechanism and scope. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.