

An inspiring vision of implicit measures to understand consumers' relationship with products

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Abstract: Some of our thoughts, attitudes or beliefs are explicit, i.e. directly or publically expressed and conscious. On the other hand, others relate to mental associations which are so strongly established that they can be unconscious or non controllable by the individual.

If much of the process that generates feelings towards a stimulus is largely unconscious, then explicit measures may merely capture attempts to present oneself in a favorable way or to relay general and commonly shared feelings and thus be poor predictors of behavior.

The present study aims at comparing several implicit measures:

- Single Category Implicit Association Test (SC-IAT) (Karpinski & Steinman, 2006): consumers sort words or images into four categories: two « target » and two « attribute » categories. The objective is to measure the strength of association between targets and attributes in consumers' mind
- Go / No-go Association Test (GNAT) (Nosek & Banaji, 2001): the objective is to measure the strength of association between attributes and one unique target
- Affect Misattribution Procedure (Murphy & Zajonc, 1993): the objective is to measure the priming effect of a stimulus on the perception of a neutral Chinese character
- Semantic Priming (Wittenbrink et al., 1997): the objective is to understand whether the relationship between a prime (product) and a target is of semantic nature. Task asked to respondents usually consists in answering as quickly as possible if a series of letters corresponds to existing words or to pseudo-words.

This methodological comparison was performed within a real case study carried out on various products. It highlights the main usages of each method, the differences of output between them as well as their respective advantages and drawbacks. It also draws attention on limits or restraints to implement implicit tests with naïve consumers.