

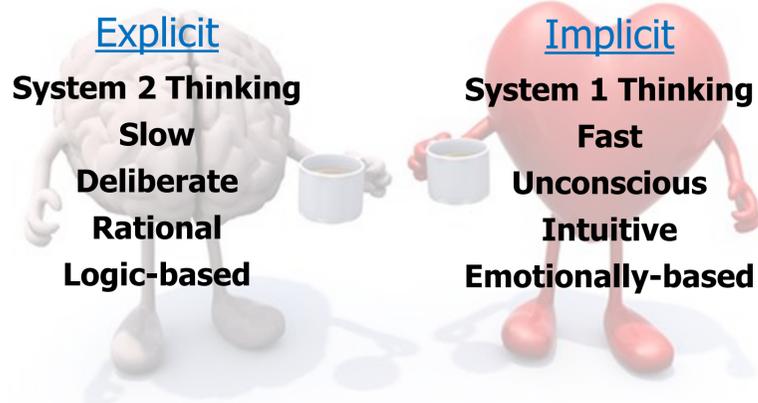
Implicit vs Explicit Testing: What can we learn from each method?

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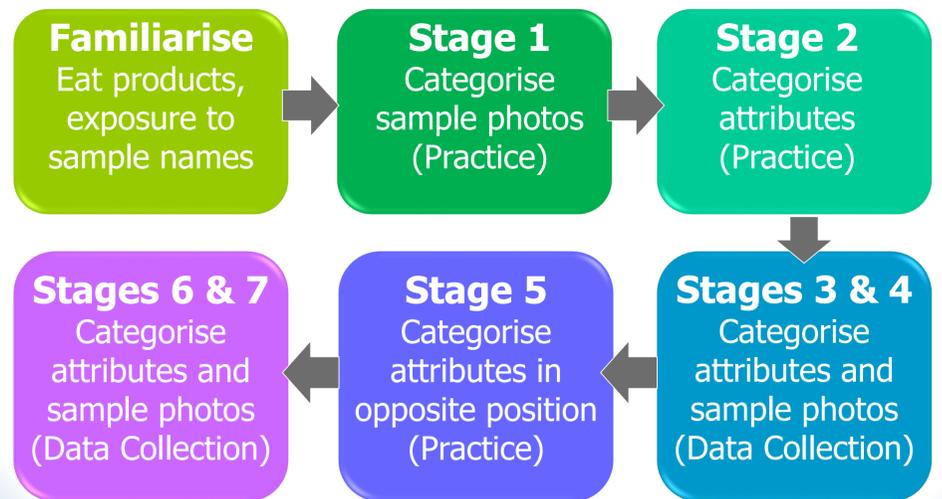
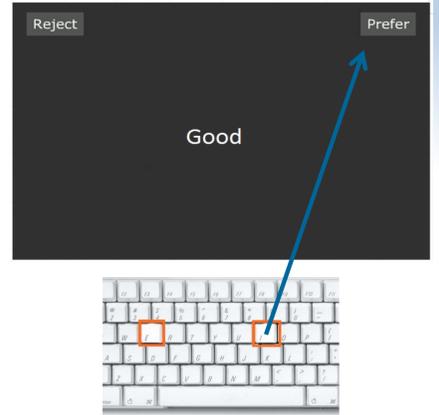
Introduction

Sensory consumer research relies on explicit methods, which generate data that capture rationalised opinions. An alternative to this is implicit testing, which captures unconscious attitudes. These methods have been used to investigate attitudes to brands, but we sought to apply this methodology to unbranded sensorial experiences¹.



Methods and Materials

- Two products: **Cupcakes (impulsive) and Flatbreads (staple)**.
- Two samples of each.
- Questions: Liking, purchase intent, preference.
- Explicit: Quantitative consumer CLT
- Implicit: Implicit Association Test (IAT, see diagrams below and right)².



Results

- The IAT generates a D score. A higher D score = a faster/stronger association between two concepts (subject intuitively favours one sample). It needs to be above 0.1 to exceed 'noise'.

Flat Bread	Subset	D Score
Preference	All	0.04
	Jacob's	-0.03
	Ryvita	0.10
Emotional Response	All	0.04
	Jacob's	0.06
	Ryvita	0.03
Purchase Intent	All	0.00
	Jacob's	0.06
	Ryvita	-0.05

Cupcakes	Subset	D Score
Preference	All	0.07
	Tesco	0.07
	Emma's	0.09
Emotional Response	All	0.04
	Tesco	0.06
	Emma's	-0.02
Purchase Intent	All	0.13
	Tesco	0.12
	Emma's	0.17

- Respondents were split into subsets based on their stated preference (from the CLT) and the D score calculated for each subset as well as the total group.

- A positive D score indicates a positive association for the Tesco cupcake, or the Ryvita flatbread. Negative scores indicate a positive association with the Emma's cupcake or the Jacob's flatbread.

Key:

All: data from all participants
Jacob's: data from Jacob's-likers only.
Ryvita: data from Ryvita-likers only.
Tesco: data from Tesco-likers only.
Emma's: data from Emma's-likers only.

Discussion

Ryvita-likers implicitly associated Ryvita with preference, which is in line with explicit results and expected.

All consumers implicitly associated purchase intent with the Tesco cupcake, even the Emma's-likers. Possible explanations for this surprising result are:

- Many Emma's-likers explicitly stated a preference for the appearance of the Tesco cupcake. Photos were used as product exemplars, so the IAT may have measured

appearance-driven 'wanting' rather than 'liking'; this group prefer eating the Emma's cupcake, but would purchase the Tesco cupcake based on its appearance.

- Respondents who explicitly preferred the Emma's cupcake may have done so for health reasons as it was a less extravagant cupcake. They may, actually, have preferred the Tesco cupcake and the IAT has revealed their true attitude.

Conclusion

The method showed potential to reveal underlying attitudes, however, most D scores did not exceed noise. The method needs some refinement in order to be a useful tool. Further work is planned.

References

1. Gregg, AP & Klymowsky, J (2013) The implicit association test in market research: Potentials and pitfalls. *Psychology & Marketing*, **30** (7), 588–601.
2. Greenwald, AG, McGhee, DE & Schwartz, JLK (1998) Measuring individual differences in implicit cognition: The implicit association test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **74** (6), 1464–1480.