

## **A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND INFERENCES: FIRST IMPRESSION AND MATE SELECTION IN INTERNET AND SPEED-DATING**

*Christopher Y. Olivola, Princeton University (Psychology), Alexander Todorov, Princeton University (Psychology)* – Our first impression of a person's personality characteristics can have an important impact on subsequent judgments and decisions concerning that person. We demonstrate evidence of the importance of personality trait inferences (PTIs), based solely on photos, in a domain involving significant real-life decision-making: dating. Using two naturalistic data sets of real daters interacting through a major online dating site and at speed-dating events, we examined the relationship between PTIs and romantic success (as measured by emails received and successful matches). Using only photos obtained from the dating site or taken at the speed-dating events, judges rated daters along various personality dimensions. We find that photo-based PTIs significantly predict dater success in both the domains of Internet matchmaking and speed-dating. Appearing fun and outgoing was positively related to success for both male and female daters. In contrast, while appearing smart and serious was positively related to success for male daters, this relationship was reversed for female daters. Most of these relationships remain significant when we control for attractiveness, ruling out the possibility that our results can be entirely explained as halo-effects of beauty. Furthermore, even after controlling for self-reported demographics and relationship preferences provided by daters in online profiles and speed-dating questionnaires, PTIs still significantly predict dater success. These results suggest that photo-based first impressions can impact a decision to contact a potential mate, even when relevant information about the person is available.

## **LESS IS MORE: WHY ONLINE DATING IS SO DISAPPOINTING, AND HOW VIRTUAL DATES CAN HELP**

*Michael I. Norton, Harvard Business School (Marketing), Jeana H. Frost, Boston University (Informatics)* – Though people believe that learning more about others leads to greater liking, acquiring more information about others actually leads, on average, to less liking, the "less is more" effect. Thus ambiguity – lacking information about another – leads to liking, while familiarity – acquiring more information – breeds contempt. This "less is more" effect is due to the cascading nature of dissimilarity: Once evidence of dissimilarity is encountered, subsequent information is more likely to be interpreted as further evidence of dissimilarity. Nowhere is this effect more pronounced than in the domain of online dating, where the ambiguity of user profiles allows individuals to read unwarranted similarity into potential dating partners ("we both like the outdoors"), notions which are often rudely disabused upon meeting ("I like skiing, he frequents nude beaches"). We document users' general disappointment with online dating and their disappointment with specific dates arranged through an online dating website. Next, we introduce and test Virtual Dates, on which potential dating partners explore a virtual environment in an interaction analogous to real-world first dates, such as chatting while wandering through a museum. Virtual Dates caused expectations for potential dates to be better calibrated, and led to greater liking after those dates had occurred.

## **F4 PREDICTIVE VALIDITY OF IMPLICIT MEASURES**

### **Steamboat Room**

**Chairs:** *Wilhelm Hofmann, University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany, and Marco Perugini, University of Essex, UK*

**Summary:** With the theoretical advancement of implicit social cognition, the development and validation of implicit measurement techniques such as the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) has received tremendous attention. This symposium brings together recent research on central questions regarding the predictive validity of implicit measures: Are implicit measures reliable

predictors of behavior? Do they add incremental validity over and above explicit measures? When and why is predictive validity high in some situations and low in others? These questions are approached from a variety of content domains, implicit measurement techniques and research strategies. De Houwer et al. present a new variant of the Extrinsic Affective Simon Task (EAST), the identification-EAST which shows incremental validity with regard to alcohol consumption. Perugini et al. provide converging evidence for the validity enhancing effect of a self-activation manipulation prior to performance of Implicit Association Tests, rendering self-activation a viable test optimization strategy. Hofmann et al. show in the domains of interracial interaction, eating, and drinking behavior that IAT measures are more predictive when available control resources are low. Finally, by adopting a meta-analytic approach, Poehlman et al. take stock of more than 80 studies on the predictive validity of implicit (and explicit) measures and scrutinize several meaningful moderator variables such as social desirability, attitude-behaviour correspondence and implicit/explicit correspondence. Findings from all presentations will be discussed with regard to the theoretical underpinnings of implicit measures as well as practical issues related to optimizing their predictive utility.

## **ABSTRACTS**

### **THE IDENTIFICATION-EAST AS A VALID MEASURE OF IMPLICIT ATTITUDES TOWARD ALCOHOL-RELATED STIMULI**

*Jan De Houwer, Ghent University, Holland, Els De Bruycker, Ghent University, Holland* – We introduce a variant of the EAST in which participants need to process the target concepts in order to perform the task. Using this variant, we measured implicit attitudes toward the target concepts 'beer' and 'sprouts' in people who consume many (heavy drinkers) or few (light drinkers) alcoholic drinks per week. As can be expected on the basis of a priori arguments, heavy drinkers had a more positive implicit attitude toward beer than light drinkers whereas both groups did not differ in their implicit attitude toward sprouts. Also, our measure of implicit attitudes was related to self-reported alcohol consumption even after controlling for explicit attitudes. The new version of the EAST seems superior to the original version as De Houwer (2003, *Experimental Psychology*), most likely because the target concepts in the original EAST are task irrelevant and thus might not always be processed.

### **AN ONTOLOGICAL TEST OF THE IAT: SELF-ACTIVATION CAN INCREASE PREDICTIVE VALIDITY**

*Marco Perugini, Department of Psychology, University of Essex, UK, Rick O'Gorman, Department of Psychology, University of Kent, UK, Andrew Prestwich, Department of Psychology, University of Essex, UK* – Extensive research has been conducted demonstrating the validity and reliability of the IAT for a broad array of behaviors and contexts. However, relatively little research has been done on examining its underlying construct validity and on individuating optimal testing conditions that can increase its predictive validity. This contribution focuses on examining whether a core theoretical foundation of the IAT paradigm is valid, specifically, whether the IAT draws on the Social Knowledge Structure. We present four studies within different domains (Study 1, N=60, attitudes toward alcohol; Study 2, N=72, on attitudes toward academic disciplines; Study 3, N=60 attitudes toward junk food; Study 4, N=39, attitudes towards Afro-Caribbeans) that show that the IAT does indeed appear to draw on the SKS. In fact, the data show that activation of the self before the categorization task enhances the predictive validity of the IAT, as one would expect if the IAT reflects the SKS. Importantly, in three of the four studies the effects of self-activation have been shown to be unique to the associative structures that underlie the IAT. The effects were neither present for, nor mediated by, explicit attitudes, and there was no evidence of an increased correlation between implicit and explicit measures due to self-activation. We discuss theoretical reasons for these findings, with emphasis also on the implica-