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The Brain-Attic: Algorithm Does Not Lead to Prevalent Information Avoidance

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Information avoidance has been identified across many contexts. The current research seeks to identify ways in which machines can impact people's decision to remain ignorant. We hypothesise that concerns about privacy, vulnerability, embarrassment, and effort may make people less likely to avoid information from machines. On the other hand, concerns about accuracy may make people less likely to avoid information from humans. Across five experiments, we studied effects of information avoidance by varying the method of communication (machine, human) and the nature of the information. Counter to our prediction, there is no significant variation between the conditions. We discuss the financial and political implications of this finding.

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Profiling Prejudice: Elucidating the Socio-Cognitive Mechanisms Underpinning Implicit Bias

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Borne out of the limitations posed by self-report questionnaires, social psychologists developed implicit measures capable of assessing people's unconscious prejudicial attitudes (e.g., the Implicit Association Test). Recent meta-analytic reviews, however, indicate that the relationship between explicit (self-report) and implicit attitudes is relatively low, and implicit attitudes rarely predict actual behaviour. This has led researchers to call for innovative ways to measure the key processes underlying implicit prejudice. Driven by this, the current study examined the relationships between implicit racial prejudice and various other measures of implicit socio-cognitive abilities. In a within-participants design, 250 participants (Mage = 20 years, 89% female, 64% White) completed measures assessing implicit racial bias, visual perspective taking, imitative tendencies, empathy, and emotion processing. Findings indicate how perspective taking skills, imitative tendencies, empathic awareness and emotion recognition predict implicit racial bias. Moreover, different racial groups (White, Black, Asian) exhibit diverse patterns of implicit racial bias. Prejudice is a significant social issue and exploring ways to detect and eliminate bias is fundamentally important to communities and organisations. This study is the first to examine how general socio-cognitive mechanisms predict implicit racial attitudes, with such assessment proffering a means with which to profile prejudice.

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