May 21st, 2019

Dear Dr. Kitayama,

Please find attached our manuscript entitled “The AMPeror’s New Clothes: Performance on the Affect Misattribution Procedure is Mainly Driven by Awareness of Prime Influence”, which we submit for consideration as an empirical paper to the “Attitudes and Social Cognition” section in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. The manuscript is co-authored by Ian Hussey and Sean Hughes, is XX pages long, and includes X figures (no tables).

The Affect Misattribution Procedure (Payne, Cheng, Govorun, & Stewart, 2005) is one of the most frequently-used procedures in the study of implicit cognition in psychological science. Over the past 15 years it has been used in social (measurement of attitudes and stereotypes towards race and gender outgroups, and prediction of sexual preferences and political orientation), personality (measurement of self-concept in terms of Big Five dimensions, and masculine self-concept), health (prediction of exercise behaviors and problematic alcohol consumption), and clinical psychology (prediction of self-harm, child abuse, depression, and anxiety) to provide insight into various forms of implicit bias, and more recently, to prospectively predict clinical phenomena and benchmark the effectiveness of psychological interventions. It has also inspired a new wave of methodologies such as the Semantic Misattribution Procedure, the Emotion Misattribution Procedure, and Truth Misattribution Procedure.

The AMP’s success is due - in large part - to its apparent ability to capture psychological processes that occur implicitly (outside of a person’s awareness or intent). If it transpired that AMP effects are actually driven by awareness or intent, then this would pose a serious challenge to how we have interpreted past AMP research and the measure’s present and future use and utility.

Across five pre-registered, highly-powered studies (total *n* = 1021), we systematically examined this question (i.e., whether AMP effects are dependent on people’s awareness of the prime’s influence on their evaluations). We open with a review and discussion of previous research which has sought to investigate the implicitness of the AMP, and the problems present within that work. We then introduce a novel, methodologically-rigorous means of testing the (un)awareness of AMP effects by using a modification on the traditional AMP procedure.

In Experiment 1, we demonstrate that effects in this modified AMP are driven almost-exclusively by a subset of trials where people are aware of the influence of primes on their evaluations, and by people with higher rates of awareness of prime influence on their responses. In Experiment 2, we show that awareness rates in our modified AMP predict performance in a traditional AMP completed at an *earlier* moment in time. In Experiment 3, we show that Experiment 2’s effects persist even when the modified and traditional AMPs assess content from entirely different domains. In Experiment 4 we show that a given person’s awareness rate on one modified AMP correlates strongly with their awareness rate on another modified AMP in a different domain (i.e., that it is the same subset of people driving performance in different AMPs). Additionally, when we exclude aware trials, the AMP’s predictive utility in discriminating between known-groups is drastically reduced. Finally, Experiment 5 shows that these findings emerge even when a supposedly superior AMP is used, one that was just introduced by Mann and colleagues in a recent edition of JPSP (Volume 116, Issue 3*,* 2019).

Overall, our findings represent an immediate and pressing challenge to how past AMP research has been interpreted, and to present and future research using the task. Specifically, our findings indicate: (a) that the AMP is not implicit in the sense of unaware, (b) that it does not capture misattribution as typically assumed (or at least misattribution as typically defined), and (c) that AMP effects cannot be used to make inferences about cognitive processes operating *in people in general*, nor as an index of the strength of implicit attitudes. These findings have wide-reaching implications for theory and research in social and personality psychology, where the AMP is frequently employed.

Based on our work’s implications, and JPSP’s longstanding and ongoing interest in publishing conceptual and empirical AMP research, we believe our manuscript will be of great interest to the journal’s readership.

I will be serving as the corresponding author for this manuscript. The other authors listed in the by-line have agreed to the by-line order and to the submission of the manuscript in this form. I have assumed responsibility for keeping my co-authors informed of our progress through the editorial review process, the content of the reviews, and any revisions made.

The work reported in this paper has not been published previously in this form or any other form, nor is it under consideration for publication elsewhere. We hope that you will consider our manuscript for publication and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

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References

Mann, T. C., Cone, J., Heggeseth, B., & Ferguson, M. J. (2019). Updating implicit impressions: New evidence on intentionality and the affect misattribution procedure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *116*(3), 349–374.

Payne, B. K., Cheng, C. M., Govorun, O., & Stewart, B. D. (2005). An inkblot for attitudes: affect misattribution as implicit measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *89*(3), 277–293.