BIAS TEST

Why we should use the Implicitly® Bias test Platform rather than the academic Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT)

The Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) was launched in 1998 after some years in development. For eight years it was heralded as 'the solution' to the age-old problem of detecting and measuring our biases. It appeared on many of the news and current affairs channels, and in social psychological research it was seen as the 'standard' metric for research.

However, in 2006 Hart Blanton and James Jaccard published a paper called '*Arbitrary metrics in psychology*' which used the Harvard IAT as an example of the assumptions and mistakes that test developers often make. The research paper and a number of follow up papers raised some grave concerns about the Harvard IAT, which have never been resolved.

Shire Professional Chartered Psychologists used the research arising from the Hart Blanton and James Jaccard 2006 concerns to develop a version of the IAT which addressed the concerns:

The Harvard test doesn't measure anything meaningful and doesn't predict behaviour

There is no evidence that the Harvard test predicts meaningful behaviour. Scores are based on a statistical effect size around changes in response, but this has no link with behaviour. We should expect changes on test scores to equate to changes in behaviour, but with the Harvard IAT they simply don't. Re-analysis of some of the research which was used to suggest the Harvard IAT did have a link to behaviour has proven to be poorly conducted. Some of it has actually been retracted by the authors, which rarely happens in academia.

Shire Professional Implicitly™ Bias Test was developed in response to this major problem. It used behavioural anchors based on the Allport model of escalating prejudice (anti-locution through to physical abuse) and the Bogardus Social Distance Scale (comfort with living proximity) to anchor test scores. The *Shire Professional Implicitly™ Bias Test* scoring algorithm was based entirely on the capacity to predict behaviour, and the test is scaled such that each point on the test score scale equates to one mark on the behavioural measures based on Allport and Bogardus. The Harvard IAT simply does not predict discriminatory behaviour whereas *Shire Professional Implicitly™ Bias Test* does.

The Harvard Test is unreliable, if you take it twice you can get different results.

Tests should be stable across time; if you take a test twice you should get similar results. There is an industry standard in that this test-retest correlation should be at least .70. The Harvard IAT social bias tests only reach .50 (the political polling versions are the only tests that each .70). *Shire Professional Implicitly™ Bias Test* has a test retest reliability of .83. It is accepted that if a test isn't reliable, it cannot be valid. If measurement isn't consistent it doesn't matter what it purports to measure. Use of the Harvard test not only runs the risk of giving people inaccurate results, but the unreliability means that what is being measured is also invalid.

Giving people uncontrolled access to the Harvard test can be damaging to test takers.

Harvard doesn't control access to the test or ensure people understand the test and their results. This can be damaging to people. *Shire Professional Implicitly™ Bias Test* has a mandatory video to watch before access is given to the test.

The Harvard test doesn't support test takers in understanding and mitigating their biases

Telling people they have a bias is one thing, but supporting them to manage and mitigate their biases is not part of the testing process. *Shire Professional Implicitly™ Bias Test* provides comprehensive supporting documentation, allowing for reflection and action planning to overcome bias. This is part of the price of the test.

Test takers misinterpret the results from the test, which can be dangerous

Many public forums have examples of people who have taken the Harvard test and who have misinterpreted the results in a negative way, self-labelling themselves as 'racist' sexist' or 'homophobic'. This is a dangerous position to place staff in as we know that anxiety can actually increase bias. *Shire Professional Implicitly™ Bias Test* provides interpretations of test results and provides detailed , evidence led advice on the actions to take to mitigate bias.

Harvard do not support the use of their test as a diagnostic tool.

This is rarely heard, but the Harvard IAT was developed as and is purely a research tool, it is not diagnostic. It is in the public domain to gather data for ongoing Harvard research, not for people to use as any sort of self-diagnostic. Harvard have openly and repeatedly said they do not support the use of the test in this way.

And finally

With the Harvard test you cannot access personal or group data. You cannot compare your individual staff , teams, departments or organisation with other teams, departments or organisations. *Shire Professional Implicitly™ Bias Test* does this and we have comparative data sets across sectors.