

Implicit and Explicit Awareness of Conflict during a Base-Rate Task Is Moderated by Strategy Choice

Ian Newman

Reasoning often involves evaluating multiple pieces of information that may be inconsistent. Detection of this inconsistency has been claimed to be flawless and implicit, indicated by implicit measures of conflict detection, such as decreased confidence and increased response time. We tested this claim, using both implicit and explicit measures of awareness of evidence inconsistency in a base-rate task, where personality descriptions and base-rate ratios could suggest similar or contrary responses. Our explicit measures indicate that reasoners seem to be explicitly aware of the response conflict. Self-identified response strategies map sensibly onto implicit measures of conflict detection: probability estimates, confidence measures, and response times. The degree of sensitivity to inconsistency was related to the strategy employed by reasoners to solve the problems. These data suggest that implicit measures of conflict detection are moderated by individual differences in strategy choice, and may be less diagnostic of conflict detection than previously thought.