

# Contrasting Positive and Negative Associations to Neutral Associations in Implicit Tests

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## Introduction

Tests like the Implicit Association Test (IAT), the Sorting Paired Features task (SPF) and the Brief IAT (BIAT), all to some degree contrast positively and negatively valenced categories against each other, in the task itself and/or in the scoring procedure. This makes it difficult to truly disentangle positive and negative associations, something that is important when measuring attitudes.

A different approach was explored in a series of studies using a method similar to SPF and BIAT, but using a neutral category as a contrast against positive and negative associations. The method was tested using gender SPFs and gender BIATs, as well as various ethnicity SPFs and a “we” vs “They” SPF.


## Method

In a positive-neutral gender SPF, the task is to sort positive or neutral words, in combination with a picture of a woman or a man, to the correct label as quickly as possible (see figure).

In a negative-neutral SPF, the task is similar, but the words are either negative or neutral.

Press “E” for Female and Positive      Press “O” for Male and Positive

Envelope



Press “D” for Female and Neutral      Press “K” for Male and Neutral

## Discussion

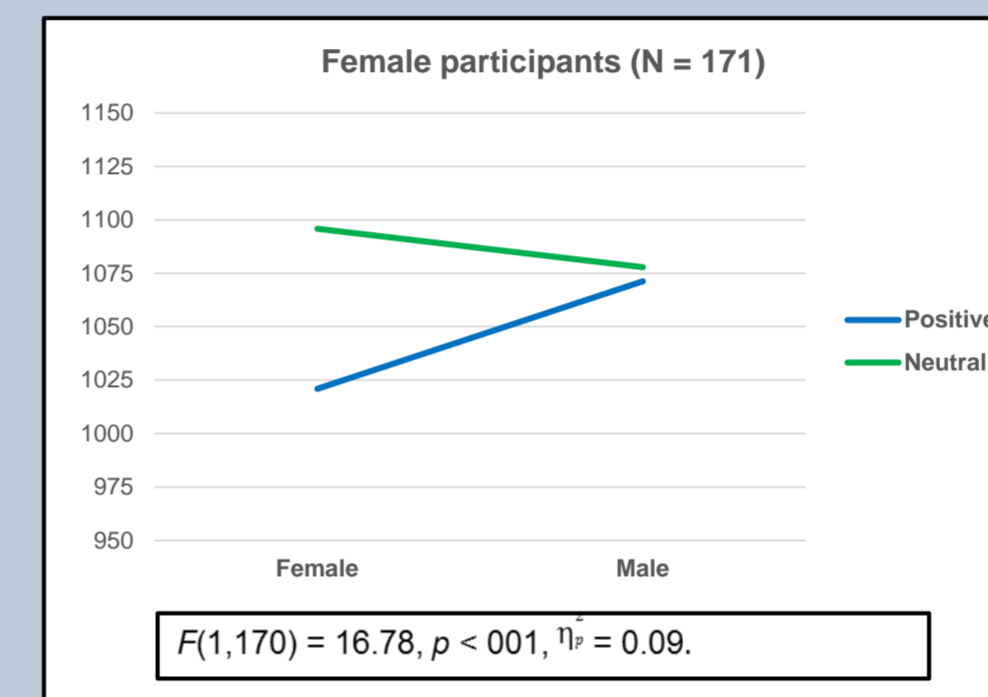
The results show some support for the validity of the positive-neutral tests. For instance, participants overall showed the expected in-group bias on these tests. Concerning criterion validity, scores on a positive-neutral gender BIAT was related to the appreciation of sexist jokes, after controlling for explicit gender attitudes.

The results for the negative-neutral tests are less clear, and questions remain concerning the tests reliability.

Further systematic studies with large samples are needed to determine the psychometric properties of tests using this method.

## Results

### Positive-neutral tests



### Negative-neutral tests

