

Bias at Play

Investigating Sensitization and Desensitization to Diversity and Inclusion via Interactions with Bots

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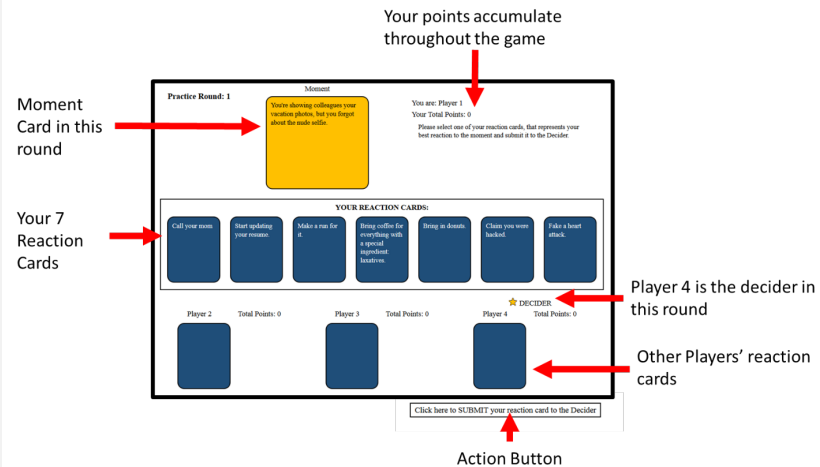
Summary

Bias resulting in workplace discrimination is insidiously pervasive and, unfortunately, the explicit nature of most diversity training approaches may induce resistant and defensive reactions that can undermine intended bias reduction goals. We investigated the impact of more naturalistic experiences that **covertly target bias using a computer-based game called Moments@Work to examine whether players would be sensitized–or desensitized–to norms regarding workplace bias.**

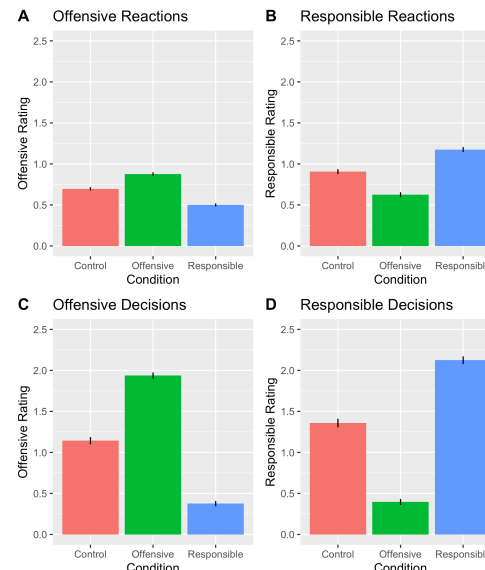
In the game, both human and bot players responded to "moments" that described workplace bias incidents by submitting "reactions", with one player deciding on a "winning" reaction among the submissions. Participants were randomly assigned to play against bots exhibiting consistently **offensive** or **responsible** submission and decision behavior. In a control condition, bots randomly submitted and reward offensive or responsible reactions.

Within offensive and responsible conditions, **people played like bots and did so increasingly over time.** After the game, **participants in the responsible condition reported greater motivation to respond without prejudice.** Our findings suggest **covert bias reduction interventions, e.g., learning social norms around responding to bias incidents–may be useful in mitigating discriminatory workplace behavior.**

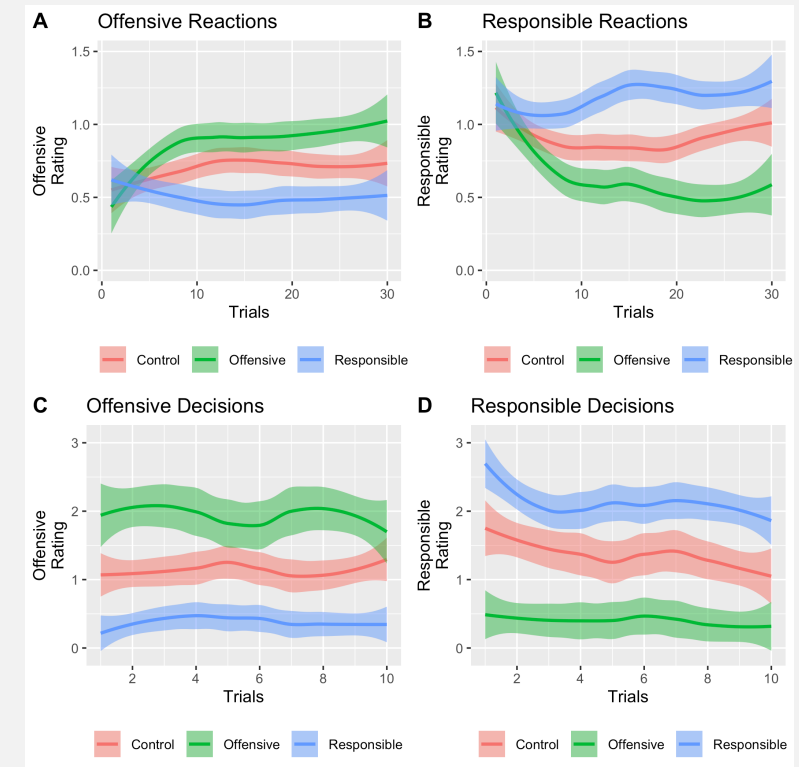
Methods: Gameplay Interface



Results I: People Play Like Bots



Results II: People Play More Like Bots over Time



Results III: Responsible Play May Reduce Prejudice

After playing, participants in the Responsible condition felt **more determined**, $t(303) = 2.83$, $p = 0.050$, and **less likely to respond without prejudice** than those in the Offensive condition, $t(303) = 2.12$, $p = 0.036$.