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Effects of Social Labeling on Giving to Charity

ROBERT E. KRAUT
University of Pennsylvania

This field experiment tested the hypothesis that social labeling influences an actor's self-concept and his perception of the consequences of his behavior. Subjects who gave to charity were labeled charitable or not labeled and subjects who refused to give were labeled uncharitable or not labeled. Subjects were later asked to contribute to a second charity by a canvasser who was either highly involved in his cause, and hence likely to dispense social reinforcements, or uninvolved in it. Subjects labeled charitable gave more and subjects labeled uncharitable gave less than their respective control groups (p < .05). However, labeling did not cause subjects to distinguish more between the involved and the uninvolved canvassers. All subjects contributed more to the involved than to the uninvolved canvasser (p < .05).

The interactionist or labeling perspective on deviance (Becker, 1963; Erikson, 1966; Lemer, 1951; Schur, 1971) focuses on the ways in which society selects certain behaviors to be deviant and certain people to fill deviant roles from the surplus of those who have performed deviant behavior, instead of focusing on individual and group predispositions to deviance. A proposition central to labeling theory is that initially a person performs deviant behavior from many of the same motives that cause him to perform normal behavior. However, once others start treating him as if he were deviant, he too comes to share this definition of himself. His self-image as a deviant maintains his deviant behavior.

While much of the research developing these ideas has been exciting and insightful, it has often been impressionistic and unsystematic.

3 This study is based on a Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Department of Psychology, Yale University. My advisor, Robert P. Abelson, helped immensely by providing intellectual and moral support for this project. Irving Janis, John McConahay, David Mettee, and Philip Powell offered sound advice. This project would have been impossible without the cooperation of Betty Hautabomma, Barbara Pavlock, and Aya Betensky, who helped in data collection, and Dennis Menshimer of the Heart Association of Greater New Haven; Carl Puleo and Allan Quail of the Easter Seal Goodwill Industries; Stanley Goldstein of the Multiple Sclerosis Society; Michael Tarantino of the Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association; Joseph Burns of the Muscular Dystrophy Association of America; and Glen Creel of the Leukemia Society.

551

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(Becker, 1963; Erikson, 1957, 1964; Coffman, 1961, 1963; and Matza, 1964). For example, much of it has lacked explicit comparison groups, and thus has not convincingly demonstrated a labeling effect. And because much of the research has been concerned with institutionalization, it has shifted the focus from the cognitive aspects of the labeling hypothesis.

Some psychological research which has not been concerned with deviance per se has nevertheless supported the labeling hypothesis. Aronson and Mettee (1968) influenced subjects' cheating in a card game, and McArthur, Kiesler, and Cook (1969) influenced subjects' volunteering to pass out leaflets, both, presumably, by changing their self-concepts.

Part of labeling theory's appeal is in the counterintuitive predictions that it makes: negative reinforcement in the form of negative labels and institutionalization maintains, not reduces, deviant behavior. However, research by Cameron (1964) and by Robin (1983) supports a social reinforcement model and suggests that labeling an individual a thief, when the label is not confounded with institutionalization, may stop future stealing. Their research suggests that when an offender is labeled a deviant, his estimates of the risks involved in being deviant may be affected as well as his self-image. He becomes more sensitive to the possibility that he may be caught again; to the negative consequences if he is caught; to the way he presents himself and the way he is perceived; and to external cues which signal further punishment.

In summary, when a person is labeled deviant two opposing forces affect him. To the extent that labeling is a cognitive manipulation of his self-concept, he comes to think of himself as deviant, and, in appropriate circumstances, to behave as if he were deviant. However, to the extent that the deviant label is a negative social reinforcement, it makes him more sensitive to negative sanctions and thus reduces his deviant behavior. If he performs deviant behavior at all, he will perform it only when the risks of detection and punishment are low.

The present research is an attempt to test these ideas in an analogy to the situation in which a person is labeled deviant for violating a social norm. While to be most relevant to labeling theory the label applied to a subject should be one that is traditionally considered deviant, this was not done here for ethical reasons. Instead, subjects were labeled uncharitable for refusing to contribute to a charity. When a subject refuses to give to a good cause, he violates a social norm (Berkowitz & Daniels, 1964), although one which is relatively conditional—that is, less widely held and enforced less often and with weaker sanctions—compared to the norms defining traditional deviant behavior (Morris, 1956).

While labeling theory, as a theory of deviance, has been exclusively concerned with negative labels, in this study some subjects were labeled charitable for contributing to a charity, as well as negative labels are used to instill the extent that labeling theory is a theory in which people learn about thesis studied. The predictions for the charitably uncharitable label.

After subjects were labeled for charitable acts, in a separate situation they were asked one. In an attempt to vary the salience of the label and thus to distinguish between the highly involved or uninvolved in the label. Presumably, an apathetic canvasser with the subject gave to his cause, and hence, on the other hand, a dedicated canvasser takes his pleasure at a contribution or display.

To summarize this reasoning, the subjects have been labeled uncharitable for refusing to contribute money to a second charity than to the labeled. Subjects who have been labeled will give more money to a charity that has not been labeled. Some subjects who have not been labeled will give more money to a charity than a subject who has been labeled uncharitable and charitable

**OVERVIEW**

Subjects were contacted by canvassers, the door-to-door appeal, subjects were asked to continue half of the experiment. E1 labeled uncharitable, not contribute, and provided no feedback. Half of the experiment, E2 labeled charitable, to contribute, and provided no feedback to the other. E1 was returned to the subjects' homes to collect for a contribution to a second charity. E2 was interested in the cause for which he was apathetic. Fourth, about 2 weeks later, E2 answer a questionnaire about reasons why

**SUBJECTS**

About 500 women from two predominately middle-class neighborhoods in New Haven, Connecticut were
offman, 1961, 1963; and Matza, 1964) which explicit comparison groups, studied a labeling effect. And because labeled with institutionalization, it has effects of the labeling hypothesis.

has not been concerned with deviant-labeling hypothesis. Aronson and heating in a card game, and influenced subjects' volunteering by changing their self-concepts.

the counterintuitive predictions in the form of negative labels and stigmas, deviant behavior. However, in (1983) supports a social reinforcer an individual a thief, when institutionalization, may stop future then an offender is labeled a deviant being deviant may be affected more sensitive to the possibility of negative consequences if he is caught; the way he is perceived; and to extent.

The deviant two opposing forces act in a cognitive manipulation of his self-as deviant, and, in appropriate deviant. However, to the extent social reinforcement, it makes him feel this way, he may be at all, he will perform it only if it is not low.

To test these ideas in an analogy: deviant for violating a social norm (Berkowitz & Daniels, conditional—that is, less widely sanctioned compared to behavior (Morris, 1956)).

deviance, has been exclusively why some subjects were labeled charitable for contributing to a charity. To the extent that positive as well as negative labels are used to instill conformity to social norms, and to the extent that labeling theory is a general statement about the way in which people learn about themselves, positive labels should also be studied. The predictions for the charitable label parallel those for the uncharitable label.

After subjects were labeled for contributing or not contributing to a charity, in a separate situation they were asked to contribute to a second one. In an attempt to vary the salience of possible sanctions for the subject and thus to distinguish between the sensitivity of labeled and non-labeled subjects to sanctions, the second charity canvasser was either highly involved or uninvolved in the cause for which he was collecting. Presumably, an apathetic canvasser would not care whether or not the subject gave to his cause, and hence would be unlikely to sanction him. On the other hand, a dedicated canvasser might be more likely to show his pleasure at a contribution or displeasure at a lack of one.

To summarize this reasoning, the predictions are that subjects who have been labeled uncharitable for refusing to give to one charity will give less money to a second charity than similar subjects who have not been labeled. Subjects who have been labeled charitable for contributing to one charity will give more money to a second charity than similar subjects who have not been labeled. Subjects in general will give more money to an involved canvasser than to an uninvolved canvasser. Subjects labeled uncharitable and charitable will distinguish between an involved and an uninvolved canvasser more than non-labeled subjects.

PROCEDURES

Overview

Subjects were contacted by charitable agencies four times. First, subjects were mailed charity appeals from three health organizations. Second, during a local door-to-door appeal, subjects were asked to contribute to a charity by E1. In the non-donor half of the experiment, E1 labeled uncharitable one half of those subjects who did not contribute, and provided no feedback to the other half. Similarly, in the donor half of the experiment, E1 labeled charitable one half of the subjects who did contribute, and provided no feedback to the other half. Third, approximately 1 week later, E1 returned to the subjects' homes to collect the main dependent measure by asking for a contribution to a second charity. E1 presented himself as either involved and interested in the cause for which he was collecting, or else as uninvolved and apathetic. Fourth, about 2 weeks later, E1 telephoned the subjects and asked them to answer a questionnaire about reasons why they might give to charity.

Subjects

About 500 women from two predominantly white working and middle-class neighborhoods in New Haven, Connecticut were mailed charity appeals as described below.
Women were selected as target subjects since they were more likely to be home twice, once for the labeling manipulation and once for the collections of the dependent measures.

The eventual subjects were 253 working- and middle-class people who were home on two occasions and talked to both E1 and E2 long enough to receive both experimental manipulations. Seventy-five percent of the subjects were women. Their mean estimated age was 47.

In two passes through each neighborhood, E1 was able to randomly assign 205 subjects to experimental conditions. Householders who didn’t answer the door or weren’t home, didn’t understand English, or closed the door before E1 could deliver the experimental manipulation, were dropped from the experiment by E2. Of the 205 subjects randomly assigned to condition by E1, 153 could also be randomly assigned to condition by E2; the other 52 subjects were dropped from the experiment by E2 because he could not personally contact them within a 2-week period after the labeling. Since E1 was kept unaware of the subject’s prior experimental condition, his decision to drop a subject from the experiment was made independently of that knowledge.

Method

Mailed charity appeals. Potential subjects were mailed charity appeals from three national health organizations. Since the response rate for written charity appeals was very low, as was expected, these three appeals provided potential subjects with several occasions in which they refused to contribute to a worthy cause. They gave the heterogeneous group an experience in common, one which was consistent with the uncharitable label that would be applied to some of them.

Labeling. Between 1 and 3 weeks after the mailing of the charity appeals, during a widely publicized local fund-raising campaign, E1 came to each subject’s home to ask for a Heart Association contribution. E1 was a white, middle-class woman, either 25 or 35 years old. E1 always asked to speak with the lady of the house if a man or a child answered the door. If a woman answered the door or no woman was available, E1 asked the person at the door for a contribution. When E1 asked for a contribution, she was blind to the experimental condition to which the subject would be assigned. E1 also asked for her name and recorded the subject’s sex, hair color, and approximate age for identification purposes.

The charitable label. If the subject made any contribution, she was assigned to the donor half of the experiment, E1 randomly assigned each subject to either the charitable label or the nonlabeled condition. In the labeled condition, E1 gave the subject a health leaflet and told her:

You are a generous person. I wish more of the people I met were as charitable as you.

Attached to the leaflet was a card containing further feedback:

Charitable people give generously to a good cause and those less fortunate than themselves. Are you one?

If the subject was assigned to the nonlabeled condition, E1 gave her a health leaflet only and no personality feedback.

The uncharitable label. If the subject made no contribution, she was assigned to the nononor half of the experiment, E1 randomly assigned her to the uncharitable label or the nonlabeled condition. In the labeled condition E1 said:

Let me give you one of our health leaflets to take home to everyone, even people like you who don’t give to these causes.

Attached to the leaflet was a card with further feedback:

Uncharitable people give excuses and promises.

Again, if the subject was assigned to the health leaflet and no feedback.

Involvement variable and dependent measure. Heart Association solicitation and the label-raising campaign for Multiple Sclerosis, E2 contributed. This was the main dependent white, middle-class, 25-year-old, bearded and experimental condition.

E2 randomly assigned the subject to either involved canvasser by presenting himself as either cause for which he was collecting. In the involved canvasser:

I’ve been working with handicapped people today. I volunteered to collect for Multiple Sclerosis. I’d like to contribute money to Multiple Sclerosis.

In the uninvolved condition he said:

Everyone in my office had to go out to raise money for charity, and I got assigned Multiple Sclerosis. I don’t know anything about Multiple Sclerosis or anything.

In both conditions, after the request for money, E2 had any usable goods to contribute to Goodwill bag which she could fill up to relieve the subject.

Telephonic survey. Between 1 and 2 weeks telephone each subject for whom a telephone number was available as a Multiple Sclerosis volunteer canvassor, a door-to-door charity appeal in which the subject had several manipulation checks and asked them if they would give their money to a future charity, E2 also who mentioned the uncharitable label, although, since telephone numbers could be found in only 88 of these agreed to participate in the survey, and reported in detail here. There were no experimental conditions in the proportion of subjects.

Subject loss. This research was conducted to eliminate subjects’ suspicion and expectancies.

Results from the survey are reported in...
Once they were more likely to be home once for the collections of the dependent
and middle-class people who were home E, long enough to receive both experi-
ences. The subjects were women. Their mean
were mailed charity appeals from three
cases rate for written charity appeals was
bequests provided potential subjects with
contribute to a worthy cause. They gave
common, one which was consistent with
mailing of the charity appeals. During
again. E, came to each subject’s home to
as a white, middle-class woman, either
with the lady of the house if a man or
before the door or no woman was avail-
and asked for a contribution to which the subject would
marked the subject’s sex, hair color, and
any contribution, she was assigned to
asynchronously assigned each subject to either the
In the labeled condition, E, gave the
If the people I met were as char-
On further feedback:
help a good cause and those less
the unlabeled condition, E, gave her a health
no contribution, she was assigned to
only assigned her to the uncharitable
condition E, said:
Let me give you one of our health leaflets anyway. We’ve been giving them
to everyone, even people like you who are uncharitable and don’t normally
give to these causes.

Attached to the leaflet was a card with further feedback:

Uncharitable people give excuses and refuse to help others. Are you one?

Again, if the subject was assigned to the nonlabeled condition, she was given only
the health leaflet and no feedback.

Involvement variable and dependent measures. Between 1 and 2 weeks after the
Heart Association solicitation and the labeling manipulation, during a local fund-
raising campaign for Multiple Sclerosis, E, came to the subject’s home asking for
a contribution. This was the main dependent measure in the experiment. E, was a
white, middle-class, 25-year-old, bearded male. E, was blind to the subject’s prior
experimental condition.

E, randomly assigned the subject to either the involved canvasser or the unin-
volved canvasser by presenting himself as either highly involved or uninvolved in
the cause for which he was collecting. In the involved condition he said:

I’ve been working with handicapped people for a couple of years now and
today I volunteered to collect for Multiple Sclerosis and Goodwill, two organi-
izations that help the handicapped. Would you like to contribute any
money to Multiple Sclerosis?

In the involved condition he said:

Everyone in my office had to go out today and spend some time collecting
for charity, and I got assigned Multiple Sclerosis and Goodwill. I think they
do something with the handicapped. I’m supposed to be asking if you’d
like to contribute any money to Multiple Sclerosis.

In both conditions, after the request for funds E, then asked the subject if she
had any usable goods to contribute to Goodwill. Finally, he offered each subject a
Goodwill bag which she could fill up with small goods and contribute at her
convenience.

Telephone survey. Between 1 and 2 weeks after the second charity appeal, E,
telephoned each subject for whom a telephone number could be found and introduced
herself as a Multiple Sclerosis volunteer conducting a survey to improve the door-
to-door charity appeal in which the subject had just participated. The survey included
several manipulation checks and asked the subject to give reasons why she might
or might not give to a future charity. E, also apologized to and reassured any subject
who mentioned the uncharitable label, although E, did not debrief the subject. How-
ever, since telephone numbers could be found for only 117 of the 153 subjects and
only 89 of these agreed to participate in the surveys, results from the survey are not
reported in detail here. There were no significant differences according to experi-
mental conditions in the proportion of subjects who completed the survey.

RESULTS

Subject loss. This research was conducted as a field experiment to
eliminate subjects’ suspicion and experimenter’s demand as explanations

Results from the survey are reported in Kraut (1973).
for the results. However, field experiments almost invariably imply a loss of experimental control. In this experiment, some subject loss after the labeling manipulation was unavoidable. It was assumed a priori that if a subject was not home at a specified time or if one member of a household rather than another answered a knock on the door, the reasons would be unrelated to the labeling manipulations. It is reasonable that the labeling manipulations would not differentially affect the type of person who was lost and that, therefore, the labeled and nonlabeled groups would be approximately as equal after subject loss as they were before.

However, since the loss of subjects might influence the interpretation of the results, it would be helpful to look at who was retained in the experiment and who was lost. Of the 205 subjects who were assigned to an experimental condition by E2, 52 were lost because they could not be contacted by E3. In 18 cases no one seemed to be home any of the times that E3 called; in 30 cases the original subject was not home or could not be contacted after someone other than the original contact answered the door; and in 4 cases the subjects seemed not to speak English.

Unfortunately, the percentage of subjects lost to the experiment differed according to the experimental condition to which they had been assigned. Thirty-eight per cent of the subjects who had given to E1 and had been labeled charitable, 17% of those who had given to E1 and had not been labeled, 18% of those who had not given to E1 and had been labeled uncharitable, 18% of those who had not given to E1 and had not been labeled could not be contacted by E3 (χ²(3) = 9.96, p < .05, 2-tailed).  

Multiple Sclerosis contribution. The contribution that the subject made to Multiple Sclerosis was the main dependent measure. Table 1 shows the mean amount of money per cell donated to Multiple Sclerosis and

| TABLE 1 |
| **MEAN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS CONTRIBUTIONS** |
| **Donor** | **Nondonor** |
| **Involvement** | **Charitable label** | **No label** | **Uncharitable label** | **No label** | **Average** |
| **High** | $8.78 | $8.46 | $8.38 | $8.50 | $8.54 |
| (n = 20) | (n = 30) | (n = 13) | (n = 11) |
| **Low** | $8.61 | $8.37 | $8.11 | $8.22 | $8.34 |
| (n = 17) | (n = 32) | (n = 14) | (n = 16) |
| **Average** | $8.70 | $8.41 | $8.33 | $8.33 |

*The probability levels for statistical tests of directional hypotheses are 1-tailed. Where no a priori hypothesis was made, probability levels are 2-tailed.
TABLE 2
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS CONTRIBUTIONS
FOR DONOR SUBJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Label (a)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>4.57**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement (b)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) × (b)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .025, 1-tailed.

the number of subjects on which the mean is based. Tables 2 and 3 are the unweighted means analysis of variance source tables for the donor and the nondonor halves of the experiment.

In the donor half of the experiment, labeling a subject charitable significantly increased her next contribution to charity ($\bar{X}_{labeled} = $70 vs $\bar{X}_{nonlabeled} = $41). This increase reflects the larger percentage of labeled subjects who made a contribution, 62% of the labeled subjects versus 47% of the nonlabeled subjects ($z = 1.52, p < .07$), and the larger contributions of those labeled subjects who did contribute ($\bar{X}_{labeled} = $1.13 vs $\bar{X}_{nonlabeled} = $0.88, t(51) = .33, n.s.). Subjects gave more to the involved canvasser, although this difference was not statistically significant.

In the nondonor half of the experiment, the mean contribution of the labeled uncharitable group was lower than that of the nonlabeled group ($\bar{X}_{labeled} = $23 vs $\bar{X}_{nonlabeled} = $33), although the difference was not statistically significant. In addition, subjects gave significantly more to the involved canvasser than to the uninvolved one.

If labeling makes subjects differentially sensitive to potential sanctioning, one would expect labeled subjects to distinguish between the involved and the uninvolved canvasser more than nonlabeled subjects. The expected interactions between the label and the involvement variables did not appear in either the donor or the nondonor halves of the experiment.

TABLE 3
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS CONTRIBUTIONS
FOR NONDONOR SUBJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Label (a)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement (b)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3.41*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) × (b)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05, 1-tailed.
Combining these data in a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ analysis of variance (Heart Association contribution by involvement by label) shows that subjects who gave to the first charity were also more likely to give to a second one ($F(1,145) = 6.26, p < .01$). Subjects were also more likely to contribute to the involved canvasser than to the uninvolved one ($F(1,145) = 3.86, p < .05$). Finally, in the most interesting comparison, subjects who were labeled charitable gave more and subjects who were labeled uncharitable gave less than their respective control groups ($F(1,145) = 3.58, p < .05$). Expressing this interaction more simply, labeling increased the consistency between a subject's contribution to the first and second charities.

The Pearson correlation between the Heart Association and the Multiple Sclerosis contribution for all subjects who had not been labeled was .66, while the correlation for all labeled subjects was .64. However, these figures overestimate the effect, since the correlations were not based on equal-sized, normal distributions.

**Goodwill contributions.** Neither the labeling nor the involvement manipulation in either the donor or the nondonor halves of the experiment had an effect on subjects' material contributions to Goodwill or their acceptance of a Goodwill donation bag. This may be because, as some subjects reported, they considered Goodwill a service to remove goods for which they no longer had a use, rather than a charity. Contributions to Goodwill seemed largely determined by whether the subject had these goods available.

**DISCUSSION**

In general, the results support the initial hypothesis that labeling a person, i.e., giving him feedback based on his behavior, causes him to behave consistently with the label and with his past behavior. In this experiment, subjects who were labeled charitable gave more and subjects who were labeled uncharitable gave less than their nonlabeled counterparts. That is, labeling increased the consistency between the subjects' two contributions.

Surprisingly, the effect of the charitable label on contributions was stronger than the effect of the uncharitable label, which on an a priori basis seemed more unusual, noteworthy, and powerful. It is possible that subjects defensively rejected the uncharitable label because of the negative qualities it attributed to them, while actively accepting the charitable label for its positive qualities (Cameron, 1964; Wallace & Sadella, 1966). It is also possible that the uncharitable label failed to have a large effect due to the already low base rate of contributions prior to the manipulation, i.e., a floor effect.

Whatever the reason, it remains necessary for us to explain how labeling affects behavior at all. While labeling the self-image on the basis of other's consistent with that self-image, there is a slightly different interpretation. Rather, with information about himself, labeling attention to his own behavior, to fresh observations, and to behave consistently, an unusual reaction, makes salient behavior and not attended to in detail.

The surprising lack of consistency on these two charity contributions ($r = .06$) may draw personality inferences from the evidence of the situational specificity of canvassers, using different appeals, canvassers, (Toschke, 1968) subjects compensated for their prior contributions to contribute and feeling the obligations if they had made a previous contribution. Lack of consistency suggests that Lepper's (1973) proposal that people observing their behavior is incomplete and uncharitable behavior may be distinctive before a person pays attention to less noteworthy behavior, such as to increase the probability that he would have a future, such as helping the same person (Camerot & Latané, 1970).

While any unusual situation might lead to a reaction may be crucially important, the concept on the basis of his behavior, that actors tend to attribute their behavior to others, the concept is probably unusual for an actor to point of view of an event involving the same may be tempted to adopt the observer's position to attribute his behavior to his behavior, when the canvasser uses the same behavior to derive that she is charitable or uncharitable toward charities and charity canvassers.
Analysis of variance (Heart Assocation) shows that subjects who were more likely to contribute also more likely to contribute. The results were significant. A comparison, subjects who were "charitable" groups $(F(1,145) = 3.58, p < 0.05)$ labeling increased the contributions. Labeling nor the involvement donor halves of the experiment. Contributions to Goodwill or their reasons may be because, as some service to remove goods than a charity. Contributions whether the subject had these hypothesis that labeling a behavior, causes him to his past behavior. In this label gave more and subjects their nonlabeled counter- the subjects’ label on contributions was label, which on a priori powerful. It is possible that label because of the negatively accepting the charitable (Wallace & Sadella, 1966). Failed to have a large effect contributions prior to the manipula- us to explain how labeling affects behavior at all. While labeling theorists claim that a person forms his self-image on the basis of others’ descriptions of him and behaves consistently with that self-image, the results of this research are open to a slightly different interpretation. Rather than directly providing a person with information about himself, labeling may cause him to pay more attention to his own behavior, to form a self-image on the basis of his observations, and to behave consistently with it. Labeling, like any other unusual reaction, makes salient behavior which is normally automatic and not attended to in detail.

The surprising lack of consistency between the nonlabeled subjects’ two charity contributions $(r = .06)$ suggests that people don’t ordinarily draw personality inferences from their own behavior. This lack may be evidence of the situational specificity of behavior, where different sexed canvassers, using different appeals, collect for different charities (Hartshorne & May, 1928; Mischel, 1968). It may also suggest that some subjects compensated for their prior contributions, feeling guilty if they had refused to contribute and feeling they had fulfilled their charitable obligations if they had made a previous contribution. Whatever its cause, the lack of consistency suggests that Freedman and Fraser’s (1966) and Lepper’s (1973) proposal that people form a self-image merely by observing their behavior is incomplete. As was the case in the Freedman and Fraser and Lepper experiments, the situation must be unusual or distinct before a person pays attention to it. A subject’s performing a less noteworthy behavior, such as telling someone the time, would not increase the probability that he would perform a similar behavior in the future, such as helping the same person by giving him a dime (Darley & Latané, 1970).

While any unusual situation might make a behavior salient, the labeling reaction may be crucially important if an actor is going to form a self-concept on the basis of his behavior. Jones and Nisbett (1971) claimed that actors tend to attribute their behavior to pressures in the situation while observers of an action tend to attribute it to causes within the actor. It is probably unusual for an actor to get a description from an observer’s point of view of an event involving himself. When this happens, the actor may be tempted to adopt the observer’s point of view and to make personality attributions from his behavior (Storrs, 1973). In the present case, when the canvasser uses the subject’s donation or lack of one to infer that she is charitable or uncharitable, the subject may also use the same behavior to make a similar inference.

A noncognitive alternative to the present results suggests that the charitable and uncharitable labels colored subjects’ feelings toward charities and charity canvassers. When $E_2$ asked for a contribution,
subjects labeled charitable, who liked canvassers, gave, and subjects labeled uncharitable, who disliked canvassers, refused to give.

However, the data from the postexperimental questionnaire, while they are weak because of the large attrition, tend to discredit this attitude toward the canvasser explanation. Subjects were asked to remember how pleasant $E_1$, who applied the label, and $E_2$, who collected the dependent measure were. While subjects labeled uncharitable remembered $E_2$ as less pleasant and those labeled charitable remembered $E_1$ as more pleasant than did the control subjects ($F(1,47) = 20.48$, $p < .001$), the effects of the experimental conditions did not generalize to judgments of $E_1$ ($F(1,59) < 1$). In addition, the subjects' recollections of $E_2$'s pleasantness were uncorrelated with their contributions to him ($r = .00$).

A social reinforcement model can also account for some of the present results, if one considers the charitable label as a positive reinforcement that should increase the behavior on which it is contingent and the uncharitable label as a negative reinforcement which should decrease behavior. In the donor half of the experiment, both labeling theory and social reinforcement theory predicted the result that labeled subjects would give more to $E_2$ than nonlabeled subjects. In the non-donor half of the experiment, the data support the labeling theory hypothesis over a social reinforcement prediction, albeit weakly; subjects labeled uncharitable gave less, not more, to a second charity.

In both the non-donor and the donor halves of the experiment, social reinforcement theory predicted that labeled subjects would be more sensitive to the possibility of future punishment and reward, and would, therefore, distinguish more between the involved and the uninvolved $E_2$ than would nonlabeled subjects. This expectation was not supported by the data; the involvement variable raised contributions equally in the labeled and the nonlabeled conditions.

However, it is possible that the involvement manipulation was not a satisfactory manipulation of sanction salience and that subjects gave more to the involved canvasser for other reasons. For instance, the involved canvasser may have been a model for charitable behavior or a more persuasive communicator. Subjects may have evaluated his cause as better and more worthy of a contribution, or may have been rewarding him for his dedication.

**Conclusion**

The present research was designed to test a theoretical point, that labeling can lead to a change in self-concept which in turn can lead to a change in behavior. However, it remains unclear from this research how powerful are the cognitive aspects of labeling compared to other components such as institutionalization, punishment, social visibility, and changes in cognitive effects may be overwhelmed. Labeling is often a public ceremony performed by prominent representatives of the normal social order (Skeen, 1964). The actor's symbolic change in his deviant character is widely communicated, as is his deviant status when others react to it. Even the subtlest, through social isolation (Philip, 1970), or through cues (Doepel & Hostler, 1967), present reminders, the cognitive aspects of powerful impact on a person's behavior in this research.

**References**


labeled canvassers, gave, and subjects canvassers, refused to give.

The experimental questionnaire, while they operation, tend to discredit this attitude potential objects were asked to remember how and remember $E_1$, who collected the dependent $E_2$ as rated uncharitable remembered $E_1$ as more pleasant, $F(1,47) = 20.48, p < .001$, the effects not generalize to judgments of $E_4$, subjects' recollections of $E_2$'s pleasantness to him ($r = .00$).

also account for some of the present activity label as a positive reinforcement which it is contingent and the uncertainty which should decrease becorment, both labeling theory and have resulted labeled subjects to be labeled subjects. In the nondonor half of the labeling theory hypothesis over a week: Subjects labeled uncharitably.

or halves of the experiment, social labeled subjects would be more punished and reward, and would, the involved and the uninvolved $E_2$'s expectations was not supported by raised contributions equally in the involvement manipulation was not a salience and that subjects gave more reasons. For instance, the involved for charitable behavior or a more evaluation his cause as better may have been rewarding him for

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to test a theoretical point, that concept which in turn can lead to a conclusion, but a conclusion is incomplete from this research how labeling compared to other components such as institutionalization, peer group and family pressure, punishment, social visibility, and changes in social and economic status. The cognitive effects may be overwhelmed by these other variables. However, labeling is often a public ceremony performed by powerful and unanimous representatives of the normal social order (Garfinkel, 1958; Erikson, 1964). The actor's symbolic change in status from a normal person to a deviant one is generally communicated. The actor is frequently reminded of his deviant status when others react to him as a deviant, either blatantly, through social isolation (Philips, 1963; Schwartz & Skolnick, 1962), or subtly, through nonverbal cues (Doob & Ecker, 1970; Farina, Allen, & Saul, 1968; Kleck, Ono, & Hastorf, 1966). With these powerful and omnipresent reminders, the cognitive aspects of labeling may have a far more powerful impact on a person's behavior than was possible to demonstrate in this research.

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