

Salient Social Norms vs Prescriptive Moral Norms vs Moral Licensing/Cleansing

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Abstract

The main hypothesis of this paper is that: in the choice between a moral good of a charitable donation, or a self-interested stance of a lottery entry, two observations will be seen: When moral identity is positively reinforced through an autobiographical recall task the impact of social descriptive norms will be lessened. And moral licensing will occur even when contrary to the descriptive norm. When moral identity is negatively affected, socially descriptive norms will take precedent and moral cleansing will not be observed. This paper aims to investigate these two forces at work in what choice subjects will make. The findings of the experiment were contrary to previous studies and showed no effect of moral licensing/cleansing, also no effect of descriptive norms were found in this experiment. Self-interest would appear to dominate the choice of action in this particular experiment, using the mturk platform.

Salient Social Norms vs Prescriptive Moral Norms vs Moral Licensing/Cleansing

People have a desire to be moral and for a moral self -image (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Monin & Miller, 2001). This moral identity and self-image motivates actions that show socially responsible behaviours in regard to other people's needs. This is especially true when it is at the top of people's minds and important to their self-concept, as stated by Reed, Aquino & Levy (2007).

However even though morality is often in wider society presented as being based upon immutable truths, the premise of this paper is that this is not so. Studies have shown that an identity's importance to an individual may change over time, being more salient at specific moments (Hart, Atkins, & Ford. 1998), it is not immutable, even with a strong motivation and desire to have a moral self-identity moral behaviours have been found to be fluid and "malleable" (Jordan, Mullen & Murnighan, 2011, p.11).

This paper will focus on the interaction of the various factors affecting this sense and salience of moral identity and how that leads to moral/immoral behavior in the real-world environment. Critical to this current paper is the fact that a sense of need for moral action and identity can be manipulated and is in fact a fluid state. There is much evidence in the literature regarding this fluid state of moral identity. Two well researched phenomena in this regard are the concepts of Moral Licensing and Moral Self Cleansing (Effron, Cameron & Monin, 2009. Merritt, Fein & Savitsky, 2009. Sachdeva, Iliev & Medin, 2009).

In short: Moral licensing refers to past moral behaviour leading to an individual feeling that they can a certain degree flout moral codes in the future. Whereas Moral cleansing refers to past immoral behaviour leading individuals to correct for that and compensate for that in the future by performing moral actions.

Previous moral behaviour requires less moral behaviour in the future to complete a sense of moral identity so an individual can license, licensing occurs when people have affirmed a moral identity and self-image of that identity is high. With previous immoral behaviour requiring a moral act in the future to complete a sense of moral identity, so called self-cleansing. This can be seen in terms of Self-completion theory (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 2013), where recalling past moral or immoral behaviour leads to attempts to complete the moral self in a compensatory manner, using Identity relevant symbols or symbolic actions.

In a study by Sachdeva et al., (2009), they found that the creation of Autobiographical stories using positively valenced words caused individuals to then go on to donate less money to charity. With those whose morality was threatened through the creation of negatively valenced Autobiographical stories donating more. They propose that: “moral self-worth is one of the gauges that indicate when moral action is needed” (Sachdeva et al., 2009, p.523).

Another 2009 study relevant to the argument forwarded by this paper is one by Jordan, Mullen and Murnighan, they asked subjects to recall a time when they had behaved morally or immorally. They then measured for engagement levels with prosocial activities. Those who recalled a moral memory were less likely to have an intention to perform a prosocial act than those who recalled an immoral memory, who were more likely to report being willing to perform a prosocial act.

As shall be seen later, relevant to the hypotheses tested in this paper, in terms of a consumer's choice, establishing a pro moral self-concept is likely to lead to a self-indulgent more hedonistic choice later (Monin & Miller, 2001), this is an example of a licensing effect where individuals feel licensed to choose something that under normal conditions would be to the detriment of a moral self-identification. Evidence for this is found in the study by Monin &

Miller, (2001) where subjects who imagine themselves doing a prosocial task go on to choose a hedonic good over and above a utilitarian purchase. In this current study subjects will be asked to choose between a chance to win a lottery or to donate money to a charity, after having taken an autobiographical recall task of previous moral and immoral behaviours.

So, in the literature evidence is provided of this compensatory behaviour for previous moral or immoral action and the fluid nature of moral identity. Past immoral actions compensated for by participation in activities that reaffirmed a moral self-image, increasing prosocial intentions, with the opposite being true for past moral actions. This effect has been observed to be strongest after the consideration of one's own past behaviour. (Jordan et al., 2011).

These choices carry a strong social identity along with them, and any research needs to consider the strong social aspects and heuristics of moral identity. This paper will investigate the interaction between morality as a prescriptive norm and morality as a salient social descriptive norm, between what one ought to do and what is being done and which process takes precedent in moral decision-making processes.

In the discussion of moral identity and the moral or immoral choices that arise from it, and the strong social component to this identity, it is important to recognize the difference between prescriptive and descriptive social norms. There is an efficiency in doing what others do in that it lessens the amount of cognitive and effortful resources used in choosing the correct course of action in a scenario. Leading to acceptance and conformity. Studies by Cialdini, Reno & Kallgren (1990) have investigated the differing effects of descriptive vs prescriptive norms. The salience to an individual of a prescriptive or descriptive norm can affect the outcome as to which heuristic achieves primacy in the consciousness of an individual. (Cialdini, Reno &

Kallgren, 1990). “Distinguishing between injunctive and descriptive norms is crucial, because both types can exist simultaneously in a setting and can have either congruent or contradictory implications for behaviour” p.1019 (Cialdini, Kallgren & Reno, 1991)

In perhaps a key understanding of Moral self-regulation Sachdeva et al. (2009) found that people who had positive and negative traits reinforced changed subsequent moral behaviour however they posit that altruistic behaviour is costly to the individual and that there are limiting mechanisms to control its manifestation. This coupled with, the already mentioned, increased cognitive efficiency of following descriptive norms in everyday life makes for an interesting area of study which this paper hopes to elaborate on. Will subjects follow descriptive norms when presented with a moral dilemma, or will they hold to the more behaviorally costly moral choice of performing an altruistic act and following prescriptive moral norms?

Further discussion of moral identity as a form of social identity is needed to pick apart this interaction as seen in the literature and as explored in the current experiment.

Belonging has been shown to be a strong and fundamental motivation (Baumeister & Leary 1995), social inclusion and belongingness are critical to human endeavor. (Bowlby, 1969). Moral identity can be fundamental to social relationship and identity and in the creation through social relationship of further identity schema (Aquino & Reed II, 2002). “Self-conceptions can be organized around moral characteristics...moral identity is another potential social identity that may be a part of a person’s social self-schema” (Aquino & Reed II, 2002, p.1424). Morality traits have been shown to have greater importance than sociability and competence traits to ingroup evaluations. (Brambilla, Rusconi, Sacchi & Cherubini, 2011). Perceptions of shame, social anxiety and depression have been shown to have a relationship to feeling inferior and

submissive behaviour, loss of acceptance and approval motivates individuals to use submissive strategies (Gilbert, 2000)

Indeed a study by Van Dillen, Enter, Peters, van Dijk & Rotteveel (2017), found that those primed by a negative moral memory will fixate less on angry eyes than happy or neutral eyes. A form of submissive behavior related to possible perceived threat due to a morally negative recollection. This past immoral behaviour leads to an awareness of Moral threat which elicits a sense that social exclusion is a very real possibility if found out. This is stronger than self-interest and leads to submissive behaviours. In contrast people who affirmed themselves due to a morally positive recollection showed no significant avoidance of angry faces.

So what happens in a situation where socially submissive/dominant behaviours lead to a situation which is contrary to the experimental evidence on moral licensing/cleansing? How does this interact with moral cleansing/licensing as individual seeks to restore a sense of moral balance through a (im)moral act or view point. If a subject has their sense of moral identity reinforced through a positive recollection will they avoid the submissive strategy of following a descriptive norm? Even if a descriptive norm directs them to donating to a charity will they instead choose to play a lottery ? Is the converse also true: a morally negative recollection will lead to submissive behaviours and stop an individual from licensing in favour of following a social descriptive norm. Will the individual not donate to a charity, but rather play a lottery ?

So it can be said that people modulate socially connected behaviour dependent on historical behaviour in particular for the purposes of this research in connection with past moral or immoral memories, there has been shown to be a connection between the behaviours of other people and the moral rationality of an individual and the meaning they subscribe to their own behaviours in similar situations (Jordan, & Monin, 2008). This strong social component of

moral/immoral behavior bring us to the central argument of this paper over what predominates the social aspect or the prescriptive compensatory nature of moral identity.

This paper aims to consider and discern under what moral conditions an individual takes into account which norms? Aiming to find further insight into: Which is stronger? Fear of social exclusion due to infringement/reinforcement of a moral self-identity, or the power of descriptive norms of what other people's behaviour will be. This will be studied by a self-interest vs altruism scenario, in this case the possible winning of a lottery entry vs a guaranteed altruistic good in the form of a donation to a charity

Central Research Question of this paper

The central research question of this paper is to see the effect of descriptive norms on moral licensing and cleansing. To see whether the descriptive norm has more effect than moral licensing/cleansing on whether individuals then carry out a moral action. I.e. to test that an explicit social norm has more effect than an internal fear/confidence about a prescriptive moral norm. Will what should be done in a situation, override, or have no effect when in comparison to a salient social cue indicating what is actually being done? Is morality the guiding force or is it actual day to day social cues/triggers?

Previous research as described has shown that in general people who recall a moral past will show licensing. Those recalling an immoral past will show cleansing. However, we expect this effect to be modulated by Descriptive/Prescriptive norm interaction and submissive/dominant behaviours as follows:

Hypotheses to be tested:

H1: When people recollect a past moral action and both the descriptive and prescriptive moral norms are on a charity donation: Subjects will choose a Lotto entry over a charitable

donation. Moral Licensing will be observed, and less socially submissive behaviour will be observed.

H2: When people recollect a past moral action and the prescriptive norm is on a charity donation, with no descriptive norm present: Subjects will choose a lotto entry over a charitable donation and moral licensing will be observed.

H3: When people recollect a past moral action and the descriptive norm is on a lottery entry, with the prescriptive norm on a charitable donation: Subjects will choose a lotto entry, moral licensing and following social norms will be observed.

H4: When people recollect an immoral past action and the descriptive norm and prescriptive norm are on a charity donation: Subjects will choose a charity donation and moral cleansing and following descriptive norms will be observed.

H5: When people recollect an immoral past action and the descriptive norm is on a lottery entry with the prescriptive norm on charitable donation: Subjects will choose a lottery entry, no moral cleansing will be observed and following descriptive norms and submissive behaviour will be observed.

H6: When people recollect an immoral past action and the Descriptive and prescriptive norm is on charitable donation: Subjects will choose charity donation and moral cleansing will be observed.

H7: When people recollect a morally neutral past action : Subjects will follow descriptive norms primarily when present.

Method

Participants and design

We tested 450 subjects, age range 21 years to 70 years old, male and female, drawn from the user population of the Mturk system (provided by Amazon.com) for online participation and collection of data. All subjects were paid the standard hourly rate plus a 50 cents lottery entry or charity donation, participant information was processed anonymously and subjects could end involvement with the experiment at any time, further to this they were fully debriefed at the end of the experiment as to the true nature of the experiment. The study was approved by the ethics committee.

The experiment had a 3 (recollection: moral, immoral, control) x 3 (norm: descriptive norm on charity, descriptive norm on lottery, descriptive norm equal on both charity and lottery) mixed design. The dependent variable was the amount of a total of 50 cents put into which choice of a lottery draw or a charitable donation to UNICEF. To disguise the purpose of the experiment the choice of whether to donate to charity or to place money in the lottery was introduced as a bonus for having taken part in the experiment.

Procedure

The outline of the procedure and summary of the factors/variables of the experiment was as follows:

Firstly, subjects filled out an informed consent. Secondly subjects were asked to fill in demographic information. Thirdly there then followed a survey measuring social anxiety followed by a survey measuring self-monitoring.

Next Three independent factors were used: Participants were asked to remember a time of immoral or moral behaviour, or a morally neutral recollection. Then they were asked to write about it briefly. There then followed a filler task (Sachdeva, Iliev & Medin, 2009) a period of

answering a series of questions about the emotions experienced in the event recollected, this also served to function as a manipulation check.

Three independent factors were then used: Matching norms of descriptive and prescriptive norms on charity. Mismatching norms of prescriptive norm on charity, descriptive on lottery, and a baseline condition of an assumed prescriptive norm for charity. The descriptive norm was represented by a jar containing cents showing where most subjects have placed their cents. Following this two within subject's dependent variables were presented: for subjects to put some cents as a bet on a lottery, and/or some cents as a donation to charity, this was achieved by moving a pile of cents on the computer to a jar for charity donation or lottery entry.

Finally, a debriefing was given: participants were informed via email if they had won the money or not, and how much was raised for charity at the end of all the subjects being tested, as well as being debriefed as to the true purpose of the experiment.

Materials

Social Anxiety/Self-Monitoring survey (These were not material to the hypothesis which was tested in this version of the study, and as such are not included in this paper)

Moral recollection manipulation and manipulation checks. Subjects were asked to remember either an immoral act they had committed in the past (threat condition), or a moral act they have committed in the past (affirmation condition), describing emotions felt related to the act. In the control condition, they were asked to write in detail about the last time they visited the grocery store. (Jordan et al. 2011; Van Dillen, Enter, Peters, van Dijk & Rotteveel, 2016).

The instructions for the three conditions were as follows:

For the threat condition subjects were instructed: “Please write in detail about an immoral act that you have engaged in in the past. How did it make you feel, and which emotions did you experience?”

For the affirmation condition subjects were instructed: “Please write in detail about a moral act that you have engaged in in the past. How did it make you feel, and which emotions did you experience?”

For the neutral condition subjects were instructed: “Please write in detail about your last visit to the supermarket. How did it make you feel, and which emotions did you experience?” (Jordan et al., 2011).

To check the strength of the manipulation (moral/immoral/control recollection) and to act as a disguise as to the real nature of the experiment, subjects were asked to complete a 7 point Likert scale (1= not at all; 7 = very much) measuring the extent to which they felt each of the following related emotions: sadness, guilt, disgust, shame, bad feelings about the self, anger, fear, happiness, good feelings about the self, pleasure, satisfaction, and pride (Van Dillen et al. 2017). Further to this, subjects were asked in what time frame the recollection occurred in: Recent past 1-4 weeks, medium past 2-6 months, or further past 6 months onwards.

Task of proportioning 50 cents. Disguised as a reward for taking part in the experiment, this task examined subjects varying degrees of following prescriptive or descriptive norms measured through asking them to proportion 50 cents between either a charity donation and/or the chance to win a lottery draw.

The Instructions were as follows: Thank you for providing us with personal information about your past behaviour. To express our gratitude for this, we will give all participants an additional \$0.50. This \$0.50 you may divide between a charity and/or a lottery. When you place

money in the lottery, you have a chance of winning an additional \$200 dollars, which we will pay out after the surveys have been collected. The more money you place in the lottery jar, the higher your chances are of winning. You may also place the money in the charity jar, the content of which we will donate to UNICEF after completion of the survey. UNICEF is a world-wide operating charity that helps children to obtain healthcare and education. The more money you place in the charity jar, the more children UNICEF can help. You can divide the money in dimes (10cts coins).

Participants were subjected to the following manipulation: a descriptive norm to be represented by a full jar showing where “most other subjects had put their money” either on the lottery or charity, the prescriptive moral norm is always assumed to be the more moral choice of a donation to charity.

Results

48 Subjects were excluded from the analysis due to recognizing the nature of the experiment, i.e. if the subject thought that the experiment had to do with whether a lottery entry or charitable donation was made, and through incorrectly performing the experiment in terms of not doing the moral/immoral/control recollection as instructed.

Manipulation Checks

Multivariate tests revealed a significant effect of moral condition on positive emotions experienced ($F[8,796]=19.33, p<0.001, \eta^2=0.16$). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that means for all the positive emotions(happiness, good feeling, pleasure, satisfaction, pride) differed significantly between all moral conditions: moral, immoral and control, all being significant at the 0.01 level. The moral recollection condition showing more

positive emotions than both the immoral and control recollection conditions. (Table 1 provides the means and standard errors for both positive and negative emotions in all conditions)

Multivariate tests also revealed a significant effect of moral condition on negative emotions experienced ($F[12,792]=38.35, p<0.001, \eta^2=0.37$). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that for negative emotions those in the negative moral recollection reported significantly more negative emotions for each emotion tested (sadness, guilt, disgust, shame, bad feelings, anger, fear) than both the moral condition and control condition, all means being significantly different at the 0.01 level, however there was no significant difference between the moral and control conditions in the individual negative emotions reported (see Table 1 for means and standard errors for negative emotions in all conditions).

Table 1

Negative and positive emotions (Mean, SD), self-reported on 7-point scales (1=not at all; 7=very much) as a function of: positive Moral recollection or Immoral recollection or a Neutral Control recollection.

| | Moral Condition | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Moral | Immoral | Control |
| Positive Emotions | | | |
| Happiness | 4.69(2.03) _a | 1.67(1.28) _b | 3.82(2.04) _c |
| Good feeling about self | 5.57(1.74) _a | 1.61(1.13) _b | 3.97(2.07) _c |
| Pleasure | 4.26(2.19) _a | 1.58(1.24) _b | 3.54(2.18) _c |
| Satisfaction | 5.39(1.92) _a | 1.69(1.40) _b | 4.23(2.29) _c |
| Pride | 5.21(1.89) _a | 1.38(0.91) _b | 2.99(1.93) _c |
| Negative Emotions | | | |
| Sadness | 1.84(1.51) _a | 3.95(1.89) _b | 1.52(1.09) _a |
| Guilt | 1.47(1.20) _a | 5.75(1.40) _b | 1.32(0.83) _a |
| Disgust | 1.54(1.43) _a | 3.83(1.98) _b | 1.53(1.18) _a |
| Shame | 1.38(1.13) _a | 5.22(1.72) _b | 1.30(0.96) _a |
| Bad feelings about self | 1.31(0.92) _a | 5.19(1.78) _b | 1.57(1.29) _a |
| Anger | 1.62(1.50) _a | 2.38(1.67) _b | 1.68(1.34) _a |
| Fear | 1.39(1.05) _a | 2.60(1.80) _b | 1.47(1.21) _a |

Note: means with different subscripts, differ at $p < .05$

Analysis of Total coins in Charity vs Lottery Jars

A two way, between groups analysis of variance was performed. The two independent variables were condition of jar (whether jar representation for charity or lottery was empty or full) and moral recollection condition (immoral, moral or control recollection). The dependent variable was amount of coins placed in the lottery jar.

Analysis of variance showed no main effect of jar condition whether full or empty ($F[2,395]=0.24, p=0.79$) on amount of coins placed in the lottery jar. Analysis of variance showed no main effect of moral condition ($F[2,395]=0.17, p=0.85$) on amount of coins placed in the lottery jar. Further to this there was also seen to be no significant interaction between jar condition and moral recollection condition ($F[4,395]=0.99, p=0.41$) on amount of coins placed in the lottery jar.

Table 2

Lottery Jar Means (Mean, SD), as a function of: positive Moral recollection or Immoral recollection or a Neutral Control recollection and Jar Condition

| | Moral Condition | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------|------------|
| | Moral | Immoral | Control |
| Jar Condition | | | |
| Charity Empty, Lottery Full | 4.00(1.62) | 3.52(1.56) | 3.62(1.50) |
| Charity and Lottery Empty | 3.55(1.52) | 3.51(1.60) | 3.78(1.65) |
| Charity Full, Lottery Empty | 3.36(1.58) | 3.72(1.72) | 3.69(1.56) |

In relation to the hypothesis, there was no effect of prescriptive or descriptive norms on amount of money donated in any of the conditions. So, no supporting evidence for any of the hypotheses was provided by the results to the experiment. Even though the effectiveness of the priming of moral condition was in line with previous studies it had no material impact on this

study. Nor did the presentation of descriptive norms of how other respondents placed coins in jars have any significant effect on behaviour.

Discussion

The data do not provide any supporting evidence for the hypothesis being tested as expressed in the introduction, there is no supporting evidence that descriptive norms have an impact on donation behavior in relation to a sense of moral integrity. In fact, no evidence of an impact of descriptive or prescriptive norms was observed, and no impact of moral integrity was observed.

This result is contrary to previous studies on moral integrity. The results failed to provide supporting evidence for the previous findings of Sachdeva et al. (2009) and Jordan et al. (2009) that the creation of negative or positive moral recollections would impact upon levels of charitable donations or prosocial action. No evidence of moral licensing or cleansing was observed, contrary to one of the fundamental premises of this experiment. Further to this no evidence of the impact of descriptive norms on behavior was seen either, contrary to research of Cialdini et al. (1990) and Cialdini et al. (1991). And no evidence of socially submissive/dominant behaviours was observed contrary to the findings of Van Dillen et al. (2017).

A critical factor in the failure to replicate and advance on previous findings maybe that the Mturk system is primarily used by subjects as a source of income by taking various survey's and taking part in various studies, and this may predispose them to seeking financial remuneration during a task. As this is the predominate salient norm they encounter while using the online platform. i.e. they are in a mode of thinking in which earning money predominates, this may make them more liable to choose the lotto option in this task rather than to make a

charitable donation, biasing our results in favour of the lotto outcome. Subjects are already in a making money mindset and seek to maximise the financial outcome from taking part in the study. This may represent a significant design flaw in Mturk experiments involving money in the process and outcomes, as opposed to a study in which subjects are not thinking primarily in terms of one of their primary sources of income for the individual. Perhaps this indicates that on this platform the prescriptive norm is one of self-interest rather than the supposed norm of a moral good and a charitable donation. Perhaps in this sense the results are realistic and indicative of actual norms in this environment, so in this sense perhaps the result is accurate and correct, Perhaps the prescriptive norm is not as supposed, as seeking a “moral” good, in the basis for the hypotheses for this experiment. This may also explain the small but significant effect of SES that was found in the study, as different economic classes have different economic outcome expectations from taking part in the study.

Another possible reason for the non-significant findings of this experiment is that perhaps the sense of social identity created was not strong enough due to the anonymous nature of the task of apportioning a donation online, where no visibility or feedback was provided on an individual’s donation amount. This aspect of “realness” is perhaps critical in tasks regarding descriptive and prescriptive norms (Andreoni, 1990. Bateson, Nettle, & Roberts, 2006. Filiz-Ozbay & Ozbay, 2014. Haley & Fessler, 2005. Locey, & Rachlin, 2015. Nettle, Harper, Kidson, Stone, Penton-Voak,, & Bateson, 2013). The informed consent also detailed that responses were processed anonymously or in a coded way, this may have given subjects the sense that their behavior was not in anyway subject to the normal public nature of moral and immoral actions. Indeed, wider society makes much of the potential to be “found out” in regulating, controlling and encouraging moral behavior or discouraging immoral behaviour. The effect of this public

visibility of moral and immoral actions should be in no way underestimated when considering the results of this current experiment. It would be an interesting possibility for an experiment to study the difference between moral/immoral behaviours in public domains vs anonymous online domains, and to see how prescriptive and descriptive norms instigate behaviours in these differing modalities.

The realism of the interface for making a donation or lottery entry may also be a factor in why the experiment failed to replicate and advance earlier findings. Perhaps the graphics used were not conducive to creating the relative realness necessary for descriptive norms to function. Perhaps a stronger scenario could be devised for creating a sense of what “others” in the task “had done” regarding amount donated or entries into the lotto. Although it was not possible within the limitations of the Mturk system a real time feedback into amount of donations or lottery entries would give the necessary presence to engage socially descriptive norms in a more concrete way. Perhaps using an animated graphic would also increase the realness, this was also not possible with the survey software used for the current experiment.

Familiarity to the mturk platform may have also led to a superficial processing of the visual information presented. And lead to a discounting of the “social” evidence provided by the imagery used, having used the platform for many such survey’s and studies subjects maybe inclined to lessen mentally the impact of what they are seeing. More novelty in the presenting of the preceding survey and the charity donation/lotto option may lead to better engagement with the process. And a more animated approach to the donation/lotto entry task may lead to a greater sense of realness of the choice.

Another possible flaw in the design of the experiment that may be seen in retrospect that maybe our charitable appeal was not strong enough. Perhaps in reflection a more empathic

appeal could have been generated to trigger prosocial action. And raise the baseline for engagement with the appeal. Perhaps in an effort to be as neutral as possible in the wording of the charity appeal we lessened the effect. Certainly Coulter & Pinto (1995) provide evidence that moderate guilt inducing appeals are more effective than either strong or low guilt inducing appeals. Basil, Ridgway, and Basil (2006) have shown that the impact of guilt on charitable donations hinges on a feeling of responsibility. They manipulated appeal statements to encourage empathy (e.g., “Imagine that you are a child with no home”) showing that empathy is an important element in the guilt process. Huhmann & Brotherton (1997), provide evidence that combining visual and verbal elements is effective in appeals, our current study relied on a purely verbal statement, perhaps a photo of a child we would be helping could have been included, and then highlighting a guilt reducing course of action.

All in all the preceding mentioned possible reasons may explain why what has been seen to be a relatively robust phenomena individually seen in previous studies failed to be replicated in the current experiment, which attempted to combine and measure moral licensing/cleansing, prescriptive norms and descriptive norms and their varying impact on a donation decision task.

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Appendices

Informed Consent**The influence of memory recollection on behaviour**

This study is about the influence of memory recollection on behaviour. This experiment will approximately take 20 minutes. We kindly ask you to take the experiment seriously. You will receive 1,5 Dollars for your participation.

If you have any questions regarding the experiment you can contact Lotte van Dillen (dillenlfvan@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)

Please read these statements and sign if you understand and agree with them:

- I have read the information letter for the participant. I could ask additional questions. My questions have been answered adequately. I have had sufficient time to decide whether or not I participate.
- I am aware that participation is completely voluntary. I know that I can decide at any moment not to participate or to stop. I do not need to provide a reason for that.
- My responses are processed anonymously or in a coded way.
- I give consent to use my data for the purposes that are mentioned in the information letter. I consent to participating in this study.

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Debrief

Thank you for taking part in this research.

The underlying purpose of this experiment was to see the effect of (im)moral recollections on prosocial activity and charitable giving. Do people given a choice between a moral good (e.g. charitable donation) versus what the majority of people are doing, conform to the social expectations/norm or the moral expectation/norm?

We portrayed the choice of charity donation/lottery entry as being secondary to the research, however this was the key thing we were studying, to determine whether respondents would proportion their cents between the charity donation and/or the lottery.

To achieve this, we represented the jars of money as indicating that previous subjects of the experiment had donated money or put money in the lottery. This was an experimental manipulation and not representative of the underlying reality of where people had put the money. The jar with more coins in showed an indication of where the behaviour of others would be in the same situation, so as to create a sense of social proof as to others behaviour in the same situation.

Would this be stronger than people's natural moral inclination to donate to charity? Further to this, what effect would asking people to recollect an (im)moral memory have on this choice of whether to donate to charity or play the lottery?

Previous experimental research has shown that people recollecting a moral event in the past are less likely to carry out a prosocial act in the future (in this case a charitable donation). People recollecting an immoral event in the past are more likely to carry out a prosocial act in the future.

Your contribution to this study is important, and will help to investigate further the relationship between morality and socially prompted action.

For more information please follow these links to articles on this topic:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-licensing>

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Daniel_Effron/publication/227697760_Moral_Self-Licensing_When_Being_Good_Frees_Us_to_Be_Bad/links/565a41f308ae1ef9297ff5a4.pdf

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/J_Murnighan/publication/50394941_Striving_for_the_Moral_Self_The_Effects_of_Recalling_Past_Moral_Actions_on_Future_Moral_Behavior/links/0c960525fcfa742f47000000.pdf

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