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The Function of Photographs in Fund Raising Appeals

Evelyne J. Dyck

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Education

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for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
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ABSTRACT

The Function of Photographs in Fund Raising Appeals

Evelyn J. Dyck

In their efforts to optimize life for victims of poverty, relief and development organizations dependent on public support frequently use photographs in their fund raising appeals. Yet little is known about the effectiveness of these photographs. This study examined the function of photographs in a direct mail appeal used by one such organization, World Vision Canada. Specifically, it sought to determine if donors' response rates and financial contributions would be differentially affected by the presence or absence of a photograph, or by the type of photograph (one eliciting positive emotions versus one eliciting negative emotions) on the appeal.

All English-speaking Canadians who had made at least one financial contribution of \$5 or more to World Vision Canada in the past year (45,855 people) were systematically divided into three equal groups, each of which received one of three versions of an appeal (no photograph; positive photograph; negative photograph). Based on relevant theory and research, it was hypothesized that response rates and average financial contributions would be higher in photograph conditions than in the no photograph condition, and that 'pleasure' (from viewing a positive photograph) would be a more effective motivator of action than would 'pain' (from viewing a negative photograph). Results following an eight week data collection period indicated that while donors were not, on the whole, differentially affected by the presence or absence of a photograph, positive photographs did in fact have a more favorable effect than negative photographs in terms of financial contributions. Results of an evaluative questionnaire sent to a subsample within each treatment group contributed to a better understanding of the study's findings.

DEDICATION

To my best friend Gerry

whose genuine concern
for others is an example
and inspiration for me

d.t.y.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For his valuable insights, unrelenting encouragement, and above all, for his time and interest, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Gary Coldevin.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Context of the Study

Although in theory "the nature and scope of educational technology is virtually unlimited" (Mitchell, 1971, p. 487), in practice it is all too often confined to the design, development and evaluation of solutions to problems occurring within the boundaries of organizations which equate education with school or instruction.

But education is more than just the passing on of facts (Morris & Gregory, 1976). It is a process which assists in the optimization of life (Braham, 1972). It is, in the last instance, "concerned with the effect of one human being on another" ("Notes on Educational Technology", 1975, p. 3). Given that technology can also be defined broadly as "the organization of activities designed to assist human adaptation to, participation in and utilization of the environment" (Braham, p. 71), it becomes clear that the nature and scope of educational technology as an applied science is indeed virtually unlimited, and that the educational technologist, "employing scientific methods, techniques, tools, knowledge and values derived from many spheres of activity" (Mitchell, 1971, p. 487), has the potential to facilitate human development in a wide variety of social contexts.

"Changing from dedication to efficiency of specific educational systems and activities to the effectiveness of human existence" (Mitchell, 1981, p. 24), the educational technologist adopting a broader perspective can design, develop and evaluate solutions to problems occurring beyond classroom walls, thereby acting as a change agent in a world where change is desperately needed if the optimization of human life is in fact a goal.

On a global scale, the need for problem-solving change agents is perhaps most pressing in what has been called the biggest drama of our time – “the struggle for world development” (Catley-Carlson, 1988, p.41). Despite criticisms that ‘development’ is nothing more than a modern form of colonialism leading millions of people into conditions of “irreversible dependency” (Rahnema, 1986, p. 42), many organizations have been able to increase their contributions to developing countries, recognizing that it is unfair to “doubly punish victims of oppression by withholding much-needed assistance” (Catley-Carlson, p. 42).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been particularly effective in actually reaching the poor in cost-effective ways (Minear, 1987). Committed to placing responsibility for development decision making “in the hands of the people” (Minear, p. 96), these organizations have already done much to optimize human life on a global scale.

One such NGO is World Vision Canada, a Christian humanitarian relief and development organization. Believing that the horror of poverty is a preventable tragedy, World Vision not only responds to problems through emergency relief but also addresses the causes of those problems through long-term community and leadership development projects (Roebbelen, 1990).

Like other organizations of its nature, World Vision Canada is dependent on public support. In order to provide millions of needy people throughout the world with education, training and life-giving care, it thus uses a variety of communication mediums (i.e. publications, direct mail, educational resources, television programs) to inform Canadians about the needs of the poor and to challenge them to become part of the solution (“People Helping People”). Although the growing number of NGO’s in Canada and elsewhere (Minear, 1987) indicate that concern for the human condition is indeed becoming a “phenomenon of our times” (Meussling, 1985, p.15), effective communications remain key to any successful fund raising effort (Gibson, 1982). The design of compelling, persuasive messages is thus of great importance to World Vision Canada.

According to Fleming and Levie, “a ‘message’ is a pattern of signs (words and pictures)

produced for the purpose of modifying the cognitive, affective or psychomotor behaviour of one or more persons" (1978, p. ix). Essentially, these three areas of potential change describe the three components of an attitude: cognitive, affective and behavioural (Lerbinger, 1972). Given the extent to which attitudes underlie persuasion and affect external responses to stimuli (Roloff & Miller, 1980), it is necessary for persuasive messages, ultimately designed to induce action, to also appeal to intellect and feeling. In challenging Canadians to respond to the needs of the poor, World Vision Canada must thus design informative messages that also foster appropriate attitudes.

Designing messages that satisfy numerous intentions requires the use of various strategies. Because the intangible output of a research study can be difficult to justify to donors (Bloom & Novelli, 1981), testing of such strategies within the context of fund raising organizations is often limited. While message design research conducted in areas relevant to fund raising (i.e. education, news dissemination and marketing) can yield somewhat generalizable results, the need for more message design research relevant to specific fund raising issues and contexts clearly exists.

The function of photographs in fund raising appeals merits particular attention, given the frequency with which they are used in this context, and given the universal impact that they have had on communication as a whole. The significance World Vision Canada attaches to picture use is confirmed by a recent content analysis of 53 direct-mail appeals sent over 3 years, which revealed that 71% of appeals sent in 1989 used photographs, compared to only 58% in 1987.

The limited research that has been conducted in the area of picture use often concludes that "while messages including pictures are preferred and attract attention, the addition of pictures does not necessarily enhance persuasion" (Fleming & Levie, 1978, p. 249). Yet the abundance of real-life examples demonstrating how photographs have been used to modify people's knowledge, feelings and actions in a variety of contexts (i.e. social, political, economic) can hardly be denied.

The discrepancy is immediately relevant to World Vision Canada, where the use of photographs is perceived to increase message persuasiveness yet often presents additional problems and costs.

Decisions to use photographs require subsequent decisions related to selection – decisions which, in the case of World Vision Canada, have been guided mostly by the “much-quoted but little understood maxim that a picture is worth a thousand words” (Culbertson, 1974a, p. 79).

Walker Evans, a master of early documentary photography once said: “Photography is about pleasure and photography is about pain” (Monk, 1989, p. 19). The tragic circumstances into which organizations like World Vision Canada bring assistance are, needless to say, more often about pain than about pleasure. Pictures showing people with pipe stem legs, distended bowel and gaunt cheeks (Huntsinger, 1982) have thus become a somewhat familiar sight to recipients of fund raising appeals. Though often evoking ‘negative’ emotions such as anger and disgust (Zeitlin & Westwood, 1986), such pictures have in some cases seemingly extended people’s compassion and helped bring relief to situations of desperate need (Monk).

In spite of this, there is a growing tendency among social marketers, those who use marketing strategies to promote social causes (Fox & Kotler, 1980), including fund raisers, to replace the depiction of human suffering with the depiction of successful social programs (Severn, 1988). According to these practitioners, the use of photographs showing people who are well-fed as a result of donations is proving to be more effective in eliciting desired results than is the use of the once popular “starving baby appeal” (Severn, 1988, p. 8 ; Huntsinger, 1982). Actual published studies which empirically support these claims are, however, virtually non-existent.

World Vision Canada’s own uncertainty concerning the relative effectiveness of ‘negative’ photographs, likely to evoke negative and painful emotions, versus ‘positive’ photographs, more likely to evoke positive emotions such as joy and acceptance (Zeitlin & Westwood, 1986), is indicated in a recent content analysis which shows they have used an almost equal number of both over the past three years. In light of increasing evidence that emotions motivate behaviour (Stout & Leckenby, 1986), it would be worthwhile for World Vision Canada to discover whether it is in fact ‘pain’ or ‘pleasure’ that most effectively persuades people to respond to the needs of others.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this study was to address the two problems that have been identified concerning the function of photographs in fund raising appeals used by World Vision Canada:

Purpose 1: The study sought to determine if responses of World Vision Canada donors would differ according to whether or not a photograph was used in a fund raising appeal.

Purpose 2: The study sought to determine if responses of World Vision Canada donors would differ according to whether a positive or a negative photograph was used in a fund raising appeal.

Terminology

While photographed subjects are in themselves neither 'positive' nor 'negative', advertising research shows that the emotions they evoke can lean in either of these directions (Hirschman, 1986). 'Positive' and 'negative' will thus be used in the manner that has been described.

It should also be noted that 'picture' and 'photograph', while potentially differing technically, are for the most part used synonymously in the literature and will thus both, unless stated, refer to visual representations "produced through photography" (Schuneman, 1965, p. 43).

Assumptions and Limitations

Because World Vision Canada is a religious organization, many of its donors come from the religious community. As such, it can be assumed that some donors will contribute not because of an appeal's format and content, but because of a deeper conviction that improvement of conditions for the poor is an inescapable part of their mandate (Knowles, 1987). Given that such donors exist throughout the population, it was assumed this would not interfere with the study. Even the religious fund raising literature indicates that good purposes without the support of effective communication materials do not usually result in successful campaigns (Gibson, 1982).

The study was limited to direct mail, as it facilitated control of exposure and response (Cabellero & Pride, 1984). Results therefore, do not necessarily generalize to other mediums.

Significance of the Study

Essentially, educational technology is concerned about moving from a problem to a solution through the application of research-based principles (Fleming and Levie, 1978).

Human suffering is a problem. World Vision Canada is concerned about its solution. Effectively communicating the problem to those who can help is a critical part of this solution.

The application of scientific design, development and evaluation principles in this context is significant in that it can indirectly contribute to the ultimate goal of education – the optimization of human life. At the same time it can demonstrate in practical terms, the theoretically unlimited nature and scope of educational technology (Mitchell, 1971).

The visually-oriented society in which we live reminds us daily that effective communication is more than a function of words. Yet the research evidence concerning the use of pictures, particularly for persuasion purposes, is not only limited but in many cases contradictory. As such, there exists very little conclusive evidence to guide World Vision Canada, a frequent user of photographs, in deciding if or how pictures should be used to enhance fund raising appeals.

A study addressing these issues is thus significant for its potential to give World Vision Canada more than intuition as a base for making picture related decisions on direct mail appeals – appeals relied on to generate approximately 16% of the organization's annual revenue (Burnham, 1990).

By potentially demonstrating that a better understanding of donors' preferences can in fact maximize resources and efforts, as costs of misdirected mailings are often greater than costs related to testing (Burnett, 1982), a study capable of providing valuable guidance concerning picture use can perhaps also stimulate further research in and beyond the given context, thereby further increasing the overall significance World Vision Canada attaches to evaluating its efforts.

The application of message design principles to the fund raising issues at hand will certainly not solve the problem of poverty. It is hoped, however, that it will enable World Vision Canada to be yet more effective in their efforts to provide a future for people who may otherwise have none.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Literature addressing the function of photographs in fund raising is, as has been mentioned, sparse and for the most part, speculative. In order to establish a relevant theoretical framework, it is therefore necessary to also examine the broader contexts and issues surrounding the specific problem. An overview of persuasive communication as connected to fund raising and related areas thus precludes a more direct consideration of how photographs function in these areas.

Background

Communication, that process by which "meanings are exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols" (Webster, 1965), always involves a sender, a message, a channel, and a receiver (Bettinghaus, 1968). While often omitted from formal communication models, a receiver's response to a sender's message is also an indispensable part of the exchange process, for without it, 'commonness' cannot in fact be established (Lerbinger, 1972). The purpose of any communication, then, is essentially to reproduce the same meaning in the receiver as is in the mind of the sender (Lerbinger). As such, any communication has the potential to influence the receiver in a variety of ways (Anderson, 1971). This, however, does not mean that all communication is persuasive, albeit the dividing line is often rather indistinct.

In order to be persuasive, communication "must involve a conscious attempt . . . to change the behaviour of another individual or group of individuals through the transmission of some message" (Bettinghaus, 1968, p. 13). Persuasion, then, is "a communication process in which the sender seeks to elicit a specific, desired response from the receiver" (Anderson, 1971, p. 6).

Such is the nature of communication in the fund raising context, where a solicitor consciously seeks to elicit a desired (financial) response from a receiver. To be as effective as possible, the fund raiser must therefore understand the persuasion process and the factors underlying it.

Central to an understanding of persuasion is an understanding of attitudes. As variables which intervene between stimulus and response (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953; Roloff & Miller, 1980), attitudes can "strengthen or weaken the likelihood that some desired action will be taken" (Ball & Byrnes, 1960, p. 85). Their role in persuasion is therefore worthy of attention.

In spite of the many theories and definitions associated with the concept 'attitude', there does exist some consensus that an attitude consists of a cognitive, affective and behavioural component (Fleming & Levie, 1978; Gagne and Briggs, 1988; Rosenberg et al., 1960), cognitive referring to one's knowledge or beliefs about an attitude object (Fleming & Levie; Rosenberg et al. ; Smith, 1982; Thompson, 1975), affective referring to one's feelings about the object, and behavioural referring to one's *tendency* to act (Thompson). Each of these components can vary in strength and direction, such that attitudes can be regarded as "systems of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings, and pro or con action tendencies with respect to social objects" (in Lerbinger, 1972, p. 32). The assumption that positive beliefs and emotions often lead to approach tendencies while negative beliefs and emotions generally lead to avoidance tendencies (Bettinghaus, 1968; Reich & Adcock, 1976) is supported by research showing a high positive correlation between the three attitude components (cited in Reich & Adcock; Rosenberg et al.). Although less predictable, the relationship between attitudes and *actual* behaviours has also been shown to be positive (Sheth & Frazier, 1982; Smith, 1982). Given the power of attitudes to affect and/or cause action, messages designed to persuade must also make appropriate appeals to intellect and feeling.

Seeking not only to induce action but also to educate and to inform, designers of fund raising messages can and in fact must thus look beyond the limited fund raising literature for guidance in formulating effective communication strategies, especially concerning the use of visual messages. The nature and quantity of picture related message design research that has been conducted in education, news dissemination and marketing (all of which are engaged in during the fund raising process), make these areas particularly relevant information sources for the the ensuing discussion, in which the function of photographs in fund raising is dealt with more specifically.

The Use of Photographs

Although visual representation has been used for communication longer than words have (Hayakawa, 1962), relatively little is known about its function in the communication process. Yet the "almost mystical" (Fleming & Levie, 1978, p. 249) communicative power of pictures surrounds us daily. Photographs in particular have taken their place as a vital element in communication (Mich, 1947) such that photography has been described as "one of the most moving and powerful instruments of communication ever devised" (Monk, 1989, Preface). Indeed, documentation of photographs being used to sway opinions of newspaper readers dates back to shortly after 1826 (Schuneman, 1965), when the first photograph was taken (Monk).

The specific question of whether or not the addition of photographs to (printed) messages can increase the persuasiveness of those messages nevertheless continues to be a subject of debate, no doubt in part due to the relative "inactivity of communication educators and researchers toward the special area of photographic communication" (Miller, in Tsang, 1984, p. 578). A generally accepted conclusion based on research that has addressed this question states that "while messages including pictures are preferred and attract attention, the addition of pictures does not necessarily enhance persuasion" (Fleming & Levie, 1978, p. 249). Use of the phrase 'does not *necessarily*' further demonstrates the uncertainty surrounding the use of pictures. While not resolving the issue, a closer examination of the related literature can result in a better understanding of it and potentially yield some valuable insights to the designer of messages in the fund raising context.

The need for persuasive messages to address all three attitude components has been discussed. Following an overview concerning the attention value of photographs, the literature relevant to the picture/no picture issue will thus be surveyed within the framework of these three components. Awareness of the cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects of photograph use will perhaps help clarify the nature of the relationship between pictures and persuasion.

Attention Value

The attention value of photographs in picture-word messages has long been recognized. In the context of newspaper readership, both early and recent studies generally support the hypothesis that attention to pictures is greater than attention to text (Geraci, 1984; Woodburn, 1947) – in many cases as much as ten times greater (Van Tubergen & Mahsman, 1974). While some research suggests that pictures may thus distract readers from focal issues (Culbertson, 1974a; Culbertson, 1974b), most indicates that photographs more often serve to tease readers into stories they might otherwise ignore (Lester, 1988; Tsang, 1984).

Educators too have recognized that pictures can facilitate attention to and enjoyment of, among other things, traditional classroom work (Swanson, 1955 in Culbertson, 1974b).

The ability of visuals, particularly photographs, to stimulate interest and "gain the attention of an often indifferent audience" (Moriarty, 1987, p. 550) is also confirmed by research related to print advertisements, where several studies (Bolen, 1984; Mitchell, 1983 in Houston et al., 1987) indicate that pictorial components of picture-word messages are usually attended to first, and often "establish an expectation for the verbal part of the ad" (Houston et al., p. 362).

Perhaps most relevant are the picture-related observations found in fund raising literature. Though few in number, these observations give yet further support to the attention-getting power of photographs. Huntsinger (1982) reports that tests have been done which indicate that a form letter with a photograph outpulls the same letter without a photograph by up to ten percent. Numerous organizations have similarly discovered that printing a photograph on the outside of an envelope can substantially increase donor response (Squires, 1988). According to Jones (1988), photographs are among the first parts of a fund raising message to receive attention.

Thus, regardless of the specific context in which a picture-word message is delivered, it seems that pictures are usually attended to first, indicating the extent to which they are often perceived to be a valuable (Culbertson, 1974b) and even superior part of the message.

The theoretical roots underlying this "picture superiority effect" (Nelson et al., 1976, p. 362, in Houston et al., 1987) can be traced back to perception research, which suggests that attention is concentrated along contours (Attneave, 1954 in Culbertson, 1974b; Fleming & Levie, 1978), something pictures can indeed offer more easily than can uniformly printed words.

That photographs attract attention to themselves and the messages surrounding them has been established in the literature. What remains to be seen is if and how their attention-getting power can enhance persuasion. For this we turn to some definitions and theoretical postulations.

Basically, attention can be defined as "the act of focusing on a stimulus or a few stimuli in preference to others" (Thompson, 1975, p. 342). It is, in short, a process of selection (Anderson, 1971). Because a major determiner of the effectiveness of a message is "how much of the message the listener actually receives" (Thompson, p. 341), a main concern of any communicator is to ensure that his/her message is the one the receiver will actually attend to (Thompson).

Common sense thus dictates that attention is prerequisite to any communication, a conclusion supported by a wide range of experimental evidence (in Thompson, 1975). Schramm, for example, has shown that in any given situation, the amount of learning is proportional to the degree of attention (1967, in Browne, 1977). Persuasion, like all forms of communication, has a learning dimension (Jamieson, 1985). Indeed, acceptance of a message, (persuasion), is dependent on the perceiving and learning/comprehending of it (Fleming & Levie, 1978). Unless attended to, a message therefore cannot evoke even the first of these responses in a receiver.

It becomes increasingly apparent that attention is indeed a "necessary condition for persuasion to occur" (Fleming & Levie, p.198). While it may be somewhat true that "what holds attention . . . determines action" (James, in Thompson, 1975, p. 363), it must also be noted that "attention is basic to but not sufficient for persuasion" (Anderson, 1971, p. 109).

Thus, while the high attention value of photographs may increase their ability to *enhance* persuasion, the fund raiser striving to *ensure* it may benefit from a better understanding of the specific effect that photographs have on the three components of a receiver's attitude.

Cognitive Aspects

Descriptions of what the cognitive component of an attitude consists of most often include the terms 'knowledge' and 'beliefs' (Fleming & Levie, 1978; Levinger, 1972; Smith, 1982; Thompson, 1975). Specifically, the cognitive component refers to what one knows or believes about an attitude object (Fleming & Levie; Rosenberg et al., 1960; Smith; Thompson), which in this context, is the medium of pictures as a whole.

Knowledge can be broadly defined as "the condition of having information" (Webster, 1965). Transmission and acquisition of information is basic to all communication, including that which is persuasive in nature. To effect changes, marketers of products and/or ideas must therefore first be concerned with the dissemination of appropriate information and education (Fine, 1981; Grondin, 1985). In spite of the popular perception that words carry information while pictures function mostly on an aesthetic level (Hirschman, 1986), much of our information does in fact come from photographs (Huntsinger, 1982). In addition to the substantial contributions they have made to, for example, our scientific and medical progress (Monk, 1989), pictures have also "immeasurably extended our understanding of . . . our fellow human beings" (Monk, p. 12). In the words of Girvin (1947, p. 207), "it is surely axiomatic that when we see things for ourselves rather than rely on someone else's word description, we understand them better".

Knowledge can also be defined more specifically as "the remembering of previously learned material" (Bloom et al., 1956, in Romiszowski, 1981, p. 63), an interpretation which has resulted in a heavy emphasis on recall as a measure of cognitive activity. Although recall is not usually sufficient to cause attitude change (Greenwald, 1968 in Fleming & Levie, 1978; Roloff & Miller, 1980), it can influence the process (Chattopadhyay & Alba, 1989). For it is in the memory that "effects of communications must be . . . stored between the time that messages are received and the time that decisions or responses are made" (Maloney, 1964, p. 524).

Recall research in the context of television news has often shown that items supported by a picture improve viewers' recall not only of the photograph but of the related news item (Bernard & Coldevin in Baggailey & Janega, 1982; Findahl in Baggailey & Sharpe, 1979).

Research in the field of print advertising also reveals that pictures usually enhance recall. Storch (1966, in Edell & Staelin, 1983) has found, for example, that people are more likely to remember having seen an advertisement if it contains a picture, while Shepard (1967, in Edell & Staelin), in comparing recall of pictorial and verbal material, has shown that pictures are more easily remembered in both immediate and delayed testing situations.

Tests conducted in cognitive psychology and education further support the general hypothesis that pictures are for the most part remembered better than words (in Houston et al., 1987).

Results such as those mentioned have led many researchers to conclude that pictures are easier and faster to process cognitively than are words (Hirschman, 1986), perhaps because they provide more concrete representation of message content (Heinich et al., 1985).

Knowledge that is acquired and recalled represents only one aspect of an attitude's cognitive dimension. Equally important is the aspect of beliefs, for unless information is believed, it is unlikely that acceptance of a message (basic to attitude change and persuasion) will occur. A belief can be defined as "an accepted datum about the world" (Anderson, 1971, p. 53). It is "a state or habit of mind in which trust . . . is placed in some person or thing" (Webster, 1965). To believe, therefore, is to accept "the existence of some condition . . ." (Smith, 1982, p. 38).

The relationship between pictures and beliefs is perhaps best summarized by the well-known maxim which states that 'seeing is believing'. Pictures not only make information more "tangible" (Katz et al., 1977, p. 231) – they are usually believed to make it more credible. The sense of realism and immediacy conveyed by photographs (Fosdick & Tannenbaum, 1964; Mich, 1947), combined with our tendency to "believe more strongly in what we can see, even at second hand" (Girvin, 1947, p. 219), has thus contributed to the belief that pictures are inherently truthful.

As has been demonstrated, pictures affect both knowledge and beliefs, hence the cognitive component of an attitude. Their potential to "illuminate the human quality behind a given need" (Gibson, 1982, p. 34) by promoting acquisition, recall and acceptance of information in fund raising messages is apparent. Consideration of their influence in the affective domain thus follows.

Affective Aspects

The affective component of an attitude refers to the "feelings or emotions of an individual about the object of the attitude" (Lerbinger, 1972, p. 34). These feelings can range from "completely favorable . . . through neutral to completely unfavorable" (Bettinghaus, 1968, p. 21). While people are seldom neutral about anything (Alreck & Settle, 1985), the direction, degree and intensity (Fleming & Levie, 1978) of their emotions is often determined by the attitude object itself, which in this case is, as has been mentioned, the medium of photographs as a whole. That pictures are usually "evaluated favorably as part of a message" (Culbertson, 1974b, p. 226) has already been established by examining their attention value in picture-word messages.

Although any medium can potentially be used as a tool of "emotional manipulation" (Arthur, 1989, p. 11), photographs in particular seem to have "affective connotations" (Hayakawa, 1962, p. 177) – so much so that some researchers have been "tempted to suggest that emotion might be a distinct photographic value" (Singletary & Lamb, 1984, p. 108). Often communicating "non-rational emotions which would still remain unexpressed when everything that can be told has been told" (Balazs, 1952, p. 149), photographs have indeed had a dramatic effective impact on people. Their power to on one hand express joy and on the other hand "stir an anguished world to tears" (Monk, 1989, p. 30) has extended not only our understanding of but also our compassion for our fellow human beings (Monk, p. 12) in a way that words would not be capable of, the latter lacking the "drama, the . . . appeal, the realism, the universality" (Mich, 1947, p. 203) – in short "the emotional and lasting effect of the pictorial inventory" (Girvin, 1947, p. 218). In trying to communicate the realities of poverty (Phillips, 1985), fund raisers have thus often relied on pictures to take people to "an emotional plane" (Roel, 1983, p. 55) that print cannot attain.

While the emotional power of pictures has received relatively little research attention, evidence does suggest that emotional messages are often rated positively (Lynn, 1974) and that they can enhance persuasion. A study comparing international persuasion variables, for example, found emotional appeals more effective than rational ones for changing opinions (Hayes, 1971).

Affective reactions play an important role in persuasion primarily because of their link with both cognition and behaviour, such that knowledge evokes feelings (Lerbinger, 1972) which in turn "prepare the body for . . . action" (Webster, 1965). Advertising researchers in particular are aware of the extent to which affect influences cognitive processing and motivates subsequent behaviour (Stout & Leckenby, 1986), thus playing "a critical role in the consumption experience" (Edell & Chapman Burke, 1988, p. 1). The theory that the "main type of thinking at the persuasion function is affective" (Rogers, 1983, p. 170) also finds support in fund raising literature, which claims that "emotion outsells intellect every time" (Lewis, 1983, p. 52).

It would thus seem that pictures can add an affective hence persuasive dimension to messages.

Behavioural Aspects

Defined as "the predisposition to act" (Thompson, 1975, p. 223), the behavioural component of an attitude is closely and positively related to the cognitive and affective components (Reich & Adcock, 1976; Rosenberg et al., 1960). Thus behavioural intentions can often be predicted from knowledge, beliefs and feelings. Because the ultimate aim of persuasion is, however, action rather than intention (Lerbinger, 1972), research frequently omits the role of the latter, and instead focusses directly on the relationship between cognition, affect and *actual* behaviour.

Despite the lack of scientific evidence concerning the effect of pictures on either intention or behaviour, pictures have been credited with moving people to action in a variety of situations. Photographic documentation of social conditions has often provided the evidence needed to inspire reform, as in the case of psychiatric care and child labor (Girvin, 1947), as well as bring about justice, as in the case of the Holocaust (Monk, 1989). In a commercial context, retailers are only too aware of the power of visual merchandising to generate impulse buying ("Indoor Billboards", 1986). Politicians too have benefited from the action-evoking properties of pictures (Moriarty & Garramone, 1986). Perhaps most relevant, however, are the previously mentioned claims that pictures have helped increase donor responses to fund raising appeals (Huntsinger, 1982).

The Direction of Photographs

As has been demonstrated, pictures can evoke cognitive, affective and behavioural changes. By sharpening the distinction between the known and the unknown (Hayakawa, 1962), thereby stimulating affective responses which "arouse motives for behaviour" (Fleming & Levie, 1978, p. 197), pictures can thus influence attitudes as a whole. While attitudes and behaviour are not always consistent (Smith & Swinyard, 1983), much of the literature indicates that they are often positively related (Sheth & Frazier, 1982). The many instances in which pictures have inspired action would seem to support this and thus provide further evidence of their persuasive powers.

To understand the specific changes pictures can evoke, it becomes necessary to consider the influential nature of *individual* pictures rather than just of the picture medium as a whole.

"Photography is about pleasure and photography is about pain" (Monk, 1989, p. 19) said Walker Evans, a master of early documentary photography. While pleasure is usually associated with 'positive' emotions such as joy and acceptance (Zeitlin & Westwood, 1986), pain more often elicits 'negative' emotions such as sadness, fear, anger and disgust (Zeitlin & Westwood). Although the subjects of photographs are in themselves neither positive nor negative, the attitudes they foster can be (Hirschman, 1986). As such, photographs can be about pain or about pleasure.

The debate over which kind of photographs ('positive' or 'negative') can best facilitate the beliefs, feelings and intentions needed to induce desired action, is of particular relevance to fund raisers involved in "the struggle for world development" (Catley-Carlson, 1988, p. 41). Because positive beliefs and emotions are generally believed to lead to approach tendencies while negative beliefs and emotions are believed to lead to avoidance tendencies (Bettinghaus, 1968; Fleming & Levie, 1978; Reich & Adcock, 1976), it would seem that appeals using positive photographs would be most appropriate for soliciting funds in this context. Yet given that guilt and fear have been shown to be among the main reasons people contribute to such charities (Hemmings, 1989; Henderson, 1985; Jones, 1988), photographs of a negative nature are possibly more effective.

Examining the literature can perhaps provide more specific guidance concerning this issue.

Negative Direction

Marketing, whether of products or ideas, involves the use of various psychological appeals, the direction of which can be positive or negative (Severn, 1988). A negative appeal depicts the unpleasant consequences that will result if a message is not adopted (Hovland et al., 1953), thus evoking negative emotions like sadness, fear, anger and disgust (Zeitlin & Westwood, 1986). While negative emotions are usually believed to cause avoidance, they can sometimes induce action. Both guilt and fear have, for example, proven to be extremely powerful motivators simply because they stimulate the desire to reduce the discomfort and tension they generate (Severn, 1988). Responding to a call for action can fulfill this desire and thus restore a state of cognitive balance (Fleming & Levie, 1978; Hovland et al.; Severn; Thompson, 1975).

As has been mentioned, guilt (being healthy when others aren't) and fear (of the poor and disadvantaged; of being punished for not giving) are among the main motives people have for giving money to fund raising campaigns (Hemmings, 1989; Henderson, 1985; Jones, 1988). Perhaps the reason that negative photographs depicting pipe stem legs, distended bowel and gaunt cheeks (Huntsinger, 1982) have so often been effective in bringing relief to crisis situations (Monk, 1989; Severn, 1988) is precisely because of their ability to evoke feelings of guilt and fear (Huntsinger, 1982) - feelings that can quickly be reduced by sending in a donation. This would support the hypothesis that persuasion is more successful when message designers also take the motives (the factors underlying attitudes) of the receiver into account (Abelson, 1959).

The apparent effectiveness with which negative photographs have incited remedial action in world development and other contexts i.e. the Depression and the Holocaust (Monk, 1989) can also be understood by examining the area of news dissemination. According to Galician (1986), the very nature of news is negative, 'news' being "the fatal crash of one plane rather than the safe landings of 500" (p. 612). As such, it is not surprising that at least one third of the information in the mass media is negative (Bohle, 1986) and that negative news gets preferential display treatment in terms of space, placement and pictorial representation (Haskins & Miller, 1984).

Galtung and Ruge (1965, in Tunstall, 1970) offer numerous reasons why negative news is preferred to positive. The first relates to the frequency criterion of media coverage. While a crisis can be covered quickly, long-term causes and solutions are too complex to deal with. The resulting negative imbalance is particularly evident in pictures and news of the Third world (Tsang, 1984). Preoccupation with "coups and earthquakes" (Giffard, 1984, p.14) has thus created a negative stereotype. Because the most influential campaigns are those which reinforce predispositions (O'Keefe, 1971), it becomes clear why pictures of crisis victims are often effective fund raisers.

Negative news is also said to fulfill latent needs. The existence of 'morbid curiosity' is indeed reflected by readership studies which indicate people are most interested in news and photographs of accidents and disasters (in Geraci, 1984). A study by Fedler et al. (1982) reveals that pictures of human suffering, while not always liked, are often rated as being tasteful and newsworthy. Thus effectiveness is not necessarily related to likability, as advertisers are aware of (Zeitlin & Westwood, 1986). What people do like is the immediate gratification provided by negative photographs (Singletary & Lamb, 1984). Generally rated as being more interesting, sensational and dynamic (Culbertson, 1974b; Van Tubergen & Mahsman, 1974), such pictures can generate a desirable level of arousal and thereby better satisfy people's morbid curiosity.

Curiosity and interest are related to unexpectedness, a third explanation Galtung and Ruge have for the preference of negative news. In a culture where progress is the norm, negative information is perceived to be unique, and is thus more memorable (Katz et al., 1977). Its ability to arouse interest and intensity also heightens its credibility (in Culbertson, 1974b).

The preferential treatment negative information receives (pictorial included) has helped reinforce the overall belief that it is more important than positive news (Bohle, 1986; Galician & Vestre, 1987; Haskins & Miller, 1984; Weinberger et al., 1984). As a result, it has often proven to be more influential (Bohle, 1986). The (traditional) effectiveness of negative pictures in a fund raising context is thus perhaps best understood in terms of the above mentioned factors, which demonstrate that aversiveness does not always increase avoidance (Carter et al., 1969).

Positive Direction

A positive appeal is one which calls attention to the rewards gained from adopting a message (Hovland et al., 1953). The positive emotions such an appeal evokes (i.e. acceptance, anticipation, and joy) are generally believed to lead to approach tendencies. As such, positive appeals are used in most commercial advertising messages (Zeitlin & Westwood, 1986). Although social marketers have in the past tended to put more emphasis on negative appeals, they are becoming increasingly aware that positive appeals can often increase effectiveness of their messages as well (Severn, 1988). In fund raising, this has meant that pictures depicting the positive outcomes of social programs have started to replace the once popular "starving baby appeal" (Severn, p. 8).

Understanding this change requires an understanding of the detrimental effects of negative appeals.

The camera's "devastating effectiveness" (Edom, 1947, p. 226) in portraying social evils such as famine can, as has been demonstrated, prompt change. The guilt and fear evoked by negative images do not, however, always motivate desired action. Dickson et al. (1981) found this to be the case in an experiment designed to test the effect of negative images in insurance marketing. Photographs of loss situations (accidents, fires) actually decreased insurance purchases, thus having the opposite effect from what was intended. Fund raisers have also observed that pictures which are too threatening may drive an individual away (Huntsinger, 1982), thus supporting Janis and Feshbach's findings that high levels of fear arousal are negatively related to persuasion (1953, in Rosnow & Robinson, 1967). An overdose of guilt can be equally damaging, particularly in a fund raising context. Because no one person can handle the guilt of all the world's poverty and starvation, a potential donor exposed to too many negative images may become overwhelmed and give up (Severn, 1988). Thus, in spite of the desire to keep "related cognitions in a balanced, harmonious state" (Fleming & Levie, 1978, p. 205), people are apparently willing and able to endure "a sizeable amount of psychological discomfort" (O'Keefe, 1971, p. 248) if they deem it necessary. Because the effects of negative feelings are both complex and unpredictable (Machleit & Wilson, 1988), increased popularity of positive appeals in social marketing is understandable.

In spite of some 'positive' perceptions people have about negative information (i.e. it is more interesting and important), negative information has often been shown to have adverse effects on individuals, causing them "to become depressed, to experience a sense of 'helplessness', to reduce their helping behavior . . . and to lower their perception of a community's benevolence" (in Galician & Vestre, 1987, p. 400). Furthermore, because "anything associated with an unpleasant stimulus also comes to be perceived more negatively" (in Haskins & Miller, 1984, p. 4), it is possible that too much negative or threatening information (pictorial included) can affect attitudes toward the message *and* the message source, such that the communicator comes to be regarded as the cause of painful and distressing emotions (Hovland et al., 1953). In a study comparing the effects of bad and good news on a community newspaper's perceived image, Haskins and Miller (1984) found that as bad news increased, so did negative perceptions toward the newspaper, such that it seemed unbalanced, untrustworthy and in fact undesirable. Like all communicators, fund raisers must examine and enhance their image by discovering what kind of information and appeals are most effective so support will be engendered rather than apathy or aversion promoted.

The growing sentiment that the media places too much emphasis on negative news (Galician & Vestre, 1987) perhaps implies that negative information is no longer unique and unexpected. The desensitization such overexposure causes is increasingly responsible for people's general feelings of disillusionment, pessimism and distrust (Haskins & Miller, 1984). Yet while "it may be getting easier to look at pictures of starving children, it's not getting easier to starve" (in McCrimmon, 1976, p. 202). Positive appeals may indeed be the only effective way left to remind people of this.

While relatively little is known about the specific motivating effects of positive appeals (Hovland et al., 1953), there exists some evidence that they can enhance persuasion. In a fund raising context, for example, the American Cancer Society has found that positive information (emphasizing hope) elicits greater donor response than does negative information (Squires, 1988). Similarly, advertising research frequently points to a correlation between positive emotions and purchase likelihood (Stout & Leckenby, 1986). Instilling a positive attitude toward

a product or idea is thus one of the major objectives of advertising (in Kroeker, 1987). This objective is often accomplished through the use of physically attractive message sources. Their capacity to evoke positive emotions has been demonstrated by several studies involving pictures.

Using photographs to examine the attraction effect of smiling on person perception, Lau (1982), for example, found that smiling people induce positive emotions in viewers and are evaluated more positively on numerous attributes (kindness, intelligence) than are nonsmiling people. Studies comparing reactions to pictures of political candidates similarly indicate that cheerful and confident facial expressions lead to more positive evaluations than do worried or unhappy ones (Moriarity & Garramone, 1986). Also using photographs, Van Tubergen & Mahsman (1974) have found that positively presented people are perceived to be more honest and sincere. Thus physical attractiveness indeed seems to play an important role in evoking positive feelings.

Experimental evidence involving the use of photographs also points to a link between physical attractiveness and opinion change. Snyder and Rothbart (1971) conducted a study in which a taped speech advocating lower speed limits was presented with either no slide, a slide of an unattractive communicator, or a slide of an attractive communicator. Prior to the study, subjects had been surveyed concerning their views on the speed limit issue. Opinion change resulting from the study was greatest among individuals who had been exposed to the attractive communicator slide. One hypothesis researchers advance concerning the positive correlation between communicator attractiveness and opinion change "assumes that viewing attractive pictures is more pleasurable than viewing unattractive pictures and that these feelings generalize to the S's evaluation of the message associated with the pleasurable source" (in Snyder and Rothbart, 1971, p. 385).

Perhaps most relevant are the picture-related studies which demonstrate that attractiveness can influence actual behaviour. Caballero and Pride (1984) discovered that a direct mail advertisement bearing a photograph of an attractive individual resulted in higher product sales than did versions of the advertisement bearing pictures of less attractive individuals. Although physical appearance is just one factor contributing to attractiveness (Fleming & Levie, 1978), its ability to influence cognitive, affective and behavioural processes cannot be underestimated.

The effects of physical attractiveness have also been observed in the context of fund raising. "The better looking the people, the better the pull" (Huntsinger, 1982, p. 54) is the conclusion some practitioners have reached following reports that "healthy-looking people in a poverty setting, often outpull hungry-looking people in the same setting" (Huntsinger, p. 54). By showing a donor the positive outcomes of adopting a message and acting on it, such pictures perhaps serve to strengthen the cognitive link between a donor's "desire for personal comfort and the comfort of a foreign child living thousands of miles away" (Severn, 1988, p. 4).

The implicit assumption that attractive sources are more influential is thus substantiated by research in numerous areas. As has also been indicated, their effectiveness is largely due to their ability to evoke positive emotions. This supports research findings which suggest that persuasion is enhanced when communication is paired with a positive stimulus (in Caballero & Pride, 1984) such that receivers are put in a positive frame of mind (Fleming & Levie, 1978).

Thus in spite of or perhaps *because of* the pervasiveness of negative information in our society, communications and psychological appeals that are positive may in fact be more desirable and in the long run, more persuasive. While the effects of positive messages have received less research attention than those of negative messages, recent findings in television research indicate that viewers prefer optimism to pessimism and find "prosocial treatments or constructive approaches to Bad News more interesting than straight Bad News" (in Galician, 1986, p. 612).

Perhaps positive news has indeed become the 'unexpected'. If so, its potential to gain attention, stimulate recall and lead to more elaborate information processing, occurring when information deviates from expectations (Houston et al., 1987), merits attention in social marketing (i.e. fund raising), where high levels of abstraction and cognitive effort are often required (Severn, 1988).

Like all communicators, fund raisers strive to design messages that elicit approach rather than avoidance behaviours. While the pictorial component of these messages has traditionally been of a negative nature (Severn, 1988), an examination of related literature gives reason to believe that in fact positive pictures are the ones recipients will "linger over, return to, keep in their desk, share with other people" (Huntsinger, 1982, p. 54) and, most importantly, respond to.

Summary

The limited body of literature which specifically addresses the function of photographs in a fund raising context is frequently based on intuition and informal observation rather than on results of formal research. To establish a relevant theoretical framework in which to discuss the problem, it has therefore been necessary to review related bodies of literature. An examination of picture-related research conducted in the areas of education, news dissemination and marketing (all of which are engaged in during the fund raising process) has provided some relevant findings.

Often serving as "surrogates for experience" (Hayakawa, 1962, p. 175), photographs have had a dramatic impact on the world. As Monk observes, their contribution to the communications revolution in our time "cannot be overstated" (1989, Preface). Their ability to enhance persuasion nevertheless continues to be debated among researchers and message designers in a variety of contexts (Fleming & Levie, 1978). The amount of empirical evidence indicating that pictures can attract attention to and facilitate recall, credibility and enjoyment of messages, would, however, seem to suggest that pictures do have persuasive powers, acceptance of a message being largely dependent on such factors as attention and learning (Fleming & Levie).

Also relevant is research that has investigated the relationship between persuasion and message direction. While information (pictorial included) evoking negative emotions such as guilt and fear has frequently proven to be an effective motivator of action, there is increasing support for the use of positive messages to elicit desired cognitive, affective and behavioural responses. Social marketers, those using marketing strategies to promote social causes (Fox & Kotler, 1980), in particular are finding that persuasion can be enhanced when communication is paired with a positive stimulus (in Caballero & Pride, 1984).

The ability of photographs to concretely "illuminate the human quality behind a given need" (Gibson, 1982, p. 34) by typifying millions of nameless and faceless people (McCrimmon, 1976), would seem to make them particularly persuasive in a fund raising context. While Huntsinger (1982) claims this is often the case, supportive empirical evidence is scant.

Research findings which support the general assumption that positive emotions lead to approach tendencies while negative emotions lead to avoidance tendencies (Bettinghaus, 1968; Fleming & Levie, 1978; Reich & Adcock, 1976) would furthermore seem to indicate to fund raisers that the pain of looking at 'horror' pictures depicting pipe stem legs, distended bowel and gaunt cheeks (Huntsinger, 1982) may not motivate donor response as effectively as will the pleasure derived from seeing pictures depicting the positive outcomes of successful social programs, particularly given the desensitization that overexposure to horror pictures has caused. Although Huntsinger also reports that positive photographs do in fact often outpull negative ones (Huntsinger, 1982), here too there is a lack of formal substantiating experimental evidence.

While research data in related areas such as education, news dissemination and marketing can be of some value to fund raisers, their generalizability is limited. Only through a continuous process of testing specific to their unique contexts can fund raisers empirically know their donors (Willmer, 1987) such that communications can focus on relevant needs and interests (Sanders, 1985) and thus maximize resources and campaign effectiveness. Despite difficulties in terms of justifying evaluation costs, fund raisers must therefore "test and test and test" (Lautman & Goldstein, 1984, p. 71) until they come up with winning combinations. Knowing if and how photographs contribute to the persuasiveness of fund raising appeals is of particular relevance, given predictions that such appeals will become increasingly dependent on visual stimulation to the point where words will support pictures rather than vice versa (Huntsinger, 1984).

The following study was designed to help clarify empirically the function of photographs in the context of one fund raising organization, World Vision Canada. By scientifically applying relevant theories and research-based message design principles to the problem at hand, the study seeks not only to contribute to the limited body of literature addressing picture-use in this context, but to demonstrate in practical terms, the virtually unlimited nature and scope of educational technology (Mitchell, 1971). Most importantly, it seeks to facilitate World Vision Canada and similar organizations in their efforts to optimize life for innocent victims of poverty.

Hypotheses

This study examined the function of photographs in a direct mail fund raising appeal used by World Vision Canada. Based on relevant theory and related research, six hypotheses were advanced:

Positive Photograph versus No Photograph:

Hypothesis 1: The response rate of the donor group receiving an appeal with a positive photograph will be significantly higher than the response rate of a donor group receiving an appeal without a photograph.

Hypothesis 2: The average financial contribution of the donor group receiving an appeal with a positive photograph will be significantly higher than the average financial contribution of a donor group receiving an appeal without a photograph.

Negative Photograph versus No Photograph:

Hypothesis 3: The response rate of the donor group receiving an appeal with a negative photograph will be significantly higher than the response rate of a donor group receiving an appeal without a photograph.

Hypothesis 4: The average financial contribution of the donor group receiving an appeal with a negative photograph will be significantly higher than the average financial contribution of a donor group receiving an appeal without a photograph.

Positive Photograph versus Negative Photograph:

Hypothesis 5: The response rate of the donor group receiving an appeal with a positive photograph will be significantly higher than the response rate of a donor group receiving an appeal with a negative photograph.

Hypothesis 6: The average financial contribution of the donor group receiving an appeal with a positive photograph will be significantly higher than the average financial contribution of a donor group receiving an appeal with a negative photograph.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Population

The target population for this study consisted of 45,855 English-speaking Canadians who had made at least one financial contribution of \$5 or more to World Vision Canada in the twelve months preceeding the study. Because they have not made a formal commitment to pledge support on a regular basis, individuals in the population are referred to as Single Gift Donors. Comprised largely of older middle and upper middle class men and women living in urban centres throughout Canada, this group receives World Vision Canada's direct mail appeals regularly and is thus familiar with their format and content.

Experimental Design

The experimental design employed in this study was a single factor design in which three picture related treatment conditions (no photograph vs. a positive photograph vs. a negative photograph) were compared. The total population was thus divided into three equal treatment groups, each consisting of 15,285 Single Gift Donors (see Figure 1).

Each member of the population was already assigned to one of 56 individual donor segments, based on the size, frequency and recency of their past contributions. To ensure that each treatment would be distributed evenly within a segment and geographic location, segments and postal codes were systematically sorted and split (i.e. every 3rd donor went to the 3rd treatment group etc.) such that the three groups were equally represented by donor location, numbers, and giving types.

The independent variables in this study were the three picture related treatment conditions. The dependent variables were 1) the response rate of each treatment group and 2) the average amount of money contributed by each treatment group. An evaluative questionnaire, administered to a small subsample within each treatment group, also served as a dependent measure.

FIGURE 1

Experimental Design

Treatment Conditions

Treatment #1	Treatment #2	Treatment #3
No photograph	Positive Photograph	Negative Photograph
n = 15,285	n = 15,285	n = 15,285

Single Factor Design

Independent Variables - Three treatment conditions

Dependent Variables

- Response rate of each group
- Average financial contribution of each group

Instrumentation

The two dependent variables in this study (money donated and rate of response) were automatically tabulated via the same computerized process World Vision Canada uses to manage other campaigns. Preprogramming ensured that each response was recorded in the appropriate account, donor segment, and treatment group. Final numbers and percentages appeared in summary form on a segmentation report. Thus, no formal measurement instruments were needed.

Nevertheless, to obtain as much information as possible concerning the effects of the three treatment conditions, a questionnaire was administered to a small subsample within each treatment group. The purpose of this questionnaire was to ascertain people's evaluation of and attitudes toward the particular appeal letter (treatment) they received, so as to facilitate a more complete analysis and explanation of resulting measures of the dependent variables.

Although the present study was concerned specifically with the effects of visual factors, the questionnaire also included items related to print factors. The biased responses that may have occurred if attention were focussed exclusively on the photograph issue were thus minimized. These questions were also included to enable World Vision Canada to become yet more aware of the specific needs and interests of its target audience (donors), as such awareness is key to successful fund raising and in fact all communication (Sanders, 1985; Severn, 1988).

Development of the questionnaire began with an examination of relevant fund raising and research methodology literature. Combined with input from World Vision Canada, this information provided guidance concerning the type of content and format questions that would be most useful for both the study and the organization. Reactions of several people (representative of the target population) to the appeal letter and selected photographs confirmed initial findings and led to a list of attitude statements from which two versions of the instrument (one for the no-photo condition and one for both photograph conditions) were constructed. Pretests involving World Vision staff and representative individuals led to revised and then final questionnaire versions (Appendix C).

Donors who received either the positive or negative photograph on their (otherwise identical) appeal letter were sent Version 1 of the questionnaire. To facilitate cooperation as well as data collection and interpretation, most of the 21 questionnaire items were closed-ended. The 9 items directly related to the specific purpose of the study were interspersed with other questions such that progression was logical and order bias avoided (Alreck & Settle, 1985). Thus general questions addressing the value of photographs (Questions 3, 4, and 14) led to more specific questions concerning the (perceived) appropriateness (Questions 11 and 12) and persuasiveness (Question 18) of the photograph used in the appeal. Opportunities for donors to state the direction of their emotional reaction to the photograph (Question 19) and indicate what kind of pictures they prefer to see (Question 20b) came near the end, followed only by one general open-ended question.

Version 2 of the questionnaire, sent to donors who received the no-photograph appeal letter, consisted of 17 items, 6 of which were directly related to the purpose of the study. Although these items were modified to make them relevant, they were designed to elicit similar information concerning the (perceived) value (Questions 3, 4, and 11) and persuasiveness (Question 15) of photographs. Donors who received this version were given the same opportunity to indicate what kind of pictures they prefer to see (Question 16b) and to respond to a general open-ended question.

In addition to being efficient and practical, scaling techniques help ensure greater accuracy, reliability and validity by translating evaluations and attitudes into numerical data (Alreck & Settle, 1985). As such, both questionnaire versions made extensive use especially of the Likert scale, popular for its reliability (Oppenheim, 1966), flexibility, and capacity to measure the intensity of an attitude. The inclusion and interspersment of both negative and positive attitude statements further helped avoid response bias by ensuring that each statement would be evaluated independently. Other scaling techniques were used as deemed appropriate.

Following a procedure similar to the one used for development of the questionnaire, a cover letter (Appendix C) was also designed to explain the purpose and emphasize the future value of the questionnaire, thereby helping justify to donors the costs involved in its administration.

Materials

Other than the presence or absence of a photograph, the appeal letter used in this study was identical for all treatment conditions. Developed by World Vision Canada, the letter resembled the organization's other monthly appeals and was thus familiar to recipients in terms of format. Because it was a 'renewal' appeal, designed to be sent out at the start of a new year, it summarized what World Vision had done in the past year and outlined what it hoped to do in the coming year. As such, the information was of a general nature and did not promote one specific project or country.

Preparing three versions of the appeal letter required the selection of one positive and one negative photograph. Because the appeal letter contained both positive and negative information, either photograph was equally representative of the content. To facilitate selection, a list of initial criteria was developed. Among other things, it stipulated that both photographs should depict a child. Children have long been recognized for their ability to appeal to the minds and emotions (and pocketbooks) of target audiences in a variety of contexts. Their "innocence as the source of a message" (Kinsey, 1987, p. 170) makes them particularly credible hence effective, as World Vision has also intuitively realized (Burnham, 1990). Because most countries mentioned in the letter are African, it was also decided that the chosen photographs should depict African children. Given the interest value of close-ups (in Coldevin, 1981) and the fact that a collector for charity can raise more money when making eye contact while asking for donations (Bull & Gibson-Robinson, 1981), close-ups featuring direct eye contact with the camera were also added as criteria. Smiling, shown to have a positive emotional impact (Lau, 1982; Nelson et al, 1988), was a condition applied only to selection of the positive photograph.

Based on these criteria, the experimenter chose approximately thirty photographs (half in each direction) from among the many slides, proofs and prints of African children located in World Vision Canada's picture files. World Vision's direct marketing manager then eliminated pictures deemed unsuitable (i.e. too negative, used before) from the organization's perspective and, with the experimenter, narrowed the choices to four positive and four negative pictures (Appendix A).

To solicit various reactions to the eight photographs, informal interviews were individually conducted with male and female World Vision staff members of different ages. Participants were asked which picture made them feel most positive, which one made them feel most negative, and which pictures best matched each other. A good 'match' required that two photographs (one positive and one negative) evoked the same extremity of emotion (to establish bipolarity) and that they were as similar as possible in terms of subject variables (age, sex, distance from camera, race, size, position) and technical variables (lighting, angle, background, quality), given the ability of such factors to influence interpretation (Coldevin, 1981; Fosdick & Tannenbaum, 1964).

Based on the results of the interviews, a survey sheet was designed and pretested to facilitate more consistent and formal testing (See Appendix A). To maximize clarity, minimize distraction and isolate those pictures which were part of a larger proof sheet (time constraints did not allow for all photographs to be reproduced to an equal size), the eight photographs were mounted on two black artboards – one for the positive pictures and one for the negative pictures. Using the survey sheet and the photograph boards, the experimenter then surveyed sixteen people (students and staff) from Concordia University in Montreal. Although most were randomly approached and thus unknown to the experimenter, care was taken to ensure that the final sample was representative of the study's population in terms of age and sex, many of World Vision's donors being older women.

A total of twenty-one people were thus involved in the final selection process. The most positive photograph according to the majority of participants was Photograph "C". Photograph "H" was the almost unanimous choice for the most negative photograph. Combined, these photographs were also chosen as the best match. Further discussion with World Vision Canada staff concerning the final recommendations resulted in Photograph "H" being replaced by Photograph "G" (chosen as the second most negative photograph). While the experimenter did not have direct control over final layout, instructions were given to ensure that the pictures were cropped as necessary, and that their final size and placement would be identical for both photograph versions of the letter. The three final versions of the appeal letter used for the study can be found in Appendix B.

Procedures

Prior to sending out the appeal letters, World Vision Canada made arrangements for computer programming to divide the population (45,855 Canadian English-speaking Single Gift Donors) into three treatment groups, each consisting of 15,285 donors. As mentioned, each member of the population already belonged to one of 56 segments, based on size, frequency and recency of their donations in the past year. By systematically separating the donors within each segment and geographic location into three groups (i.e. the first donor on the list was placed in the first group etc.), the computer ensured that treatment conditions were distributed evenly, such that the three groups were equally represented in terms of donor location, numbers and past giving behaviours.

Computer programming also allowed for the systematic selection of 1,415 questionnaire recipients (a number dictated by budgetary constraints). In order to ensure that this subsample would also be representative of the target population in terms of donors' past giving tendencies and their geographic location, each of the three treatment groups were again sorted first by segment and then by postal code. Within each of the three groups, the computer then selected every 33rd record (donor). Records were thus selected from British Columbia to Newfoundland for each segment, within each treatment group. Because segments containing more donors were allotted more questionnaires, representativeness therefore also existed in terms of numbers. To ensure, however, that every segment was represented, the computer automatically chose one record from each of the nine segments having less than 33 donors. The final result was that 472 donors in two treatment groups and 471 donors in one of the groups were sent a questionnaire.

To facilitate data analysis, all appeals and questionnaires were coded prior to being sent. One of three code numbers appeared on the response card (used to remit payment) included in each appeal letter package. Money that was received was thus immediately applied to the appropriate account, segment, and treatment group. Similarly, one of three code numbers appeared on the back of each questionnaire, as well as on the envelope in which the questionnaire was mailed.

World Vision Canada sent out all appeal letters on December 28th, 1989. Questionnaires were all sent out two weeks later (Jan. 11th, 1990) to allow time for delivery of the appeals. A copy of the appeal letter was included with each questionnaire, as it was possible that donors no longer had access to their original letter. Appeal and questionnaire responses were received by World Vision Canada until the previously set cutoff date, February 28th, 1990, was reached. This date gave donors eight weeks to respond to the appeal and six weeks to return the questionnaire. Given that direct mail fund raisers usually receive 50% of total returns within three weeks of a mailing (Hemmings, 1989), or, in the case of World Vision, within five weeks (Burnham, 1990), and that survey researchers receive 95% of total returns within three or four weeks (Alreck & Settle, 1985), the time this study allowed for data collection was more than sufficient. Upon completion of this collection period, the experimenter received a final report from World Vision Canada, indicating the total financial contributions and response rates for each treatment group. At this time, all questionnaires were also sent to the experimenter to be processed and analyzed.

Analysis of Data

Because this study involved a population rather than a sample of one, it accounted for the complete set of observations about which conclusions were to be drawn (Minium & Clarke, 1982). Any resulting differences among dependent measures were therefore considered significant in strictly quantitative terms. In order to determine their true significance to World Vision Canada, however, findings concerning both response rates and financial contributions were also analyzed and discussed in terms of practical implications for the organization.

Using descriptive statistics, questionnaire results were analyzed and referred to in terms of their ability to contribute to a further understanding of the study's outcome. While frequencies and percentages were reported for each question, only questions relevant to the study were incorporated into the analyses. Others have been included in Appendix D. Overall questionnaire response rates were compared using the chi-square statistic. To determine representativeness, questionnaire responses were also compared with appeal responses on general and specific levels.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to address the function of photographs in a direct mail fund raising appeal sent by World Vision Canada. Specifically, the study sought to determine if donors' response rates and financial contributions to the appeal would be affected by the presence or absence of a photograph, or by the type of photograph (positive or negative) used on the appeal.

Given the extent to which response rates and financial contributions can affect each other, resulting data were examined not only in relation to individual hypotheses, but also in relation to interdependent hypotheses (i.e. those predicting the same direction of relationship between groups for both responses and contributions). Because the study involved a population rather than a sample of one, differences were seen as being significant in strictly quantitative terms. In order to determine the true significance of these differences to World Vision Canada with respect to future message design strategies, they were, however, also examined in practical terms.

Appeal Letter Data

The total response rate and financial outcome (total and average) of the fund raising appeal fell within an acceptable range in terms of World Vision Canada's expectations (Burnham, 1990). This information, together with information concerning responses and financial contributions of each treatment group, is presented in Table 1. As shown, quantitative differences between groups were minimal for both responses and contributions, particularly when seen in the total context.

A more in-depth analysis of the data was thus undertaken to determine if larger differences or conflicting trends possibly existed among groups at a more detailed data level. Specifically, this analysis involved first comparing responses and contributions among the three treatment groups within each of the 56 donation segments (defined by size, frequency and recency of previous gifts) into which current responses and contributions had already been recorded by World Vision Canada.

TABLE 1

Responses and Financial Contributions to Appeal Letter

Condition	Appeals Sent #	Total Responses #	Total Contributions \$	Response Rate %	Average Contribution \$
No Photograph	15,285	1,123	52,337	7.3	46.61
Positive Photograph	15,285	1,097	53,263	7.2	48.55
Negative Photograph	15,285	1,091	50,076	7.1	45.90
TOTAL	45,855	3,311	155,676	7.2	47.02

Although differences could be found within some segments, even at this level, both responses and contributions were predominantly similar among treatment conditions. Because it is not realistic for an organization like World Vision Canada to individualize messages according to slight differences existing at this level, data from individual segments were regrouped according to size, frequency and recency. Here too, analysis revealed an overall similarity between groups, with differences often being accounted for by the nature of the relationship between response rates and financial contributions, particularly in segments where fewer people gave higher donations.

Table 2 provides a further regrouping and reanalysis of these segments as structured into four larger categories – low donors, medium donors, high donors, and previously cancelled donors (for which data concerning size of gifts in the previous year was not available). Combined with Table 3, indicating the relative importance of each of these categories to the total outcome of the appeal (i.e. previously cancelled donors showed the lowest response, while medium and high donors were responsible for both highest response rates and financial contributions), information at this level can yield more practical implications for message designers. Despite similarities among treatment conditions (Table 2), it is interesting to note, for example, that while total gifts of most groups were highest in the no photograph condition, second highest in the positive condition, and lowest in the negative condition, high donors gave most in the positive condition, second most in the negative condition, and least in the no photograph condition, perhaps indicating that high donors attach more significance to photographs. Response rates for this group would seem to support this, since although more people responded in the no photograph condition than in the negative condition, they contributed less. While this is important, given that money is in the last instance what determines the effectiveness of a fund raising campaign, the interdependence between contributions and responses must not be overlooked, as is demonstrated by the profound effect that differing responses have on the total and average gifts of previously cancelled donors. Data presented in Tables 1 – 3 are referred to more specifically in the analyses by hypotheses.

TABLE 2

**Responses and Financial Contributions to Appeal Letter
According to Donation Ranges**

Condition	Appeals Sent #	Total Responses #	Total Contributions \$	Response Rate %	Average Contribution \$
<u>Low Donors (\$5-25)</u>					
No Photograph	1,932	164	2,657	8.5	16.20
Positive Photograph	1,932	173	2,655	9.0	15.35
Negative Photograph	1,932	160	2,293	8.3	14.30
TOTAL	5,796	497	7,605	8.6	15.30
<u>Medium Donors (\$25-200)</u>					
No Photograph	7,210	725	27,327	10.1	37.60
Positive Photograph	7,209	698	26,980	9.7	38.65
Negative Photograph	7,210	731	25,879	10.1	35.40
TOTAL	21,629	2,154	80,186	10.0	37.23
<u>High Donors (\$200+)</u>					
No Photograph	1,397	136	17,571	9.7	129.20
Positive Photograph	1,397	139	20,750	9.9	149.28
Negative Photograph	1,396	127	19,433	9.1	153.00
TOTAL	4,190	402	57,754	9.6	143.67
<u>Previously Cancelled Donors*</u>					
No Photograph	4,746	98	4,782	2.1	48.80
Positive Photograph	4,747	87	2,878	1.8	33.10
Negative Photograph	4,747	73	2,471	1.5	33.85
TOTAL	14,240	258	10,131	1.8	39.27
GRAND TOTAL	45,855	3,311	155,676	7.2	47.02

* Not classified according to donation range

TABLE 3

**Responses and Financial Contributions to Appeal Letter By Donation Ranges
As Part of Total Responses and Contributions To Appeal Letter**

Condition	% of Total Appeals Sent	% of Total Responses	% of Total Contributions
<u>Low Donors (\$5-25)</u>			
No Photograph	4.2	5.0	1.7
Positive Photograph	4.2	5.2	1.7
Negative Photograph	4.2	4.8	1.5
TOTAL	12.6	15.0	4.9
<u>Medium Donors (\$25-200)</u>			
No Photograph	15.7	21.9	17.6
Positive Photograph	15.7	21.0	17.3
Negative Photograph	15.7	22.1	16.6
TOTAL	47.2	65.1	51.5
<u>High Donors (\$200+)</u>			
No Photograph	3.0	4.1	11.3
Positive Photograph	3.0	4.2	13.3
Negative Photograph	3.0	3.8	12.5
TOTAL	9.1	12.1	37.1
<u>Previously Cancelled Donors*</u>			
No Photograph	10.4	3.0	3.1
Positive Photograph	10.4	2.6	1.8
Negative Photograph	10.4	2.2	1.6
TOTAL	31.1	7.8	6.5
GRAND TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Not classified according to donation range

Questionnaire Data

Table 4 presents information concerning the total as well as the individual treatment group responses to the evaluative questionnaire. Of the 1,415 questionnaires originally sent (471 to the positive photograph condition and 472 to the other two conditions), 17 were returned due to undeliverable addresses. Because these questionnaires never reached their destination, they were excluded from the study, thus accounting for any differences in numbers of appeals sent.

The overall response rate of 9.2% fell within an acceptable range, given that response rates to mail surveys are often between 5 and 10% (Alreck & Settle, 1985). Although a chi-square test revealed no statistical significance between response rates for the three treatment groups ($\chi^2=.59$, $df=2$, $p>.05$), it is interesting to note that, as in the case of the appeal letter, frequency and rate of response to the questionnaire was quantitatively highest in the no photograph condition.

To determine to what extent the questionnaire responses represented the four major donor groups identified in Tables 2 and 3, responses were categorized in the same manner (see Table 5). Comparing column 4 of Table 5 (% of total questionnaires sent) with column 1 of Table 3 (% of appeals sent) confirms that each of the three subsamples which received the questionnaires were in fact representative of the population. Comparing column 3 of Table 5 (questionnaire response rates) with column 4 of Table 2 (appeal response rates), reveals that within the four donor groups, questionnaire response rates were also generally representative of appeal response rates in terms of proportion and order (again, medium and high donors being first and previously cancelled donors being last). Representativeness in terms of proportion is further reflected by comparing column 5 of Table 5 with Column 2 of Table 3, in which responses in each treatment condition have been compared to total responses. Although smaller numbers in the questionnaire data has in some cases resulted in seemingly large percentage differences, it is still apparent that medium and high donors were particularly active in responding to both questionnaires and appeals. Because of the representativeness existing between questionnaire and appeal responses, it was not necessary to classify actual answers to questions beyond the three treatment condition categories.

TABLE 4
Responses to Questionnaire

Condition	Questionnaires* Sent #	Total Responses #	Response Rate %
No Photograph	468	48	10.2
Positive Photograph	468	40	8.5
Negative Photograph	462	41	8.9
TOTAL	1,398	129	9.2

$\chi^2 = .59 \quad p > .05$

* (Undeliverable addresses excluded)

TABLE 5

Responses to Questionnaire According to Donation Ranges

Condition	Questionnaires Sent #	Total Responses #	Response Rate %	% of Total Questionnaires Sent (1,398)	% of Total Responses (129)
<u>Low Donors (\$5-25)</u>					
No Photograph	57	6	10.5	4.1	4.7
Positive Photograph	58	4	6.9	4.2	3.1
Negative Photograph	58	5	8.6	4.2	3.9
TOTAL	173	15	8.7	12.4	11.6
<u>Medium Donors (\$25-200)</u>					
No Photograph	216	26	12.0	15.5	20.2
Positive Photograph	216	21	9.7	15.5	16.3
Negative Photograph	209	22	10.5	15.0	17.1
TOTAL	641	69	10.8	45.8	53.5
<u>High Donors (\$200+)</u>					
No Photograph	51	11	21.5	3.7	8.5
Positive Photograph	50	11	22.0	3.6	8.5
Negative Photograph	51	7	13.7	3.7	5.4
TOTAL	152	29	19.1	10.9	22.5
<u>Previously Cancelled Donors*</u>					
No Photograph	144	5	3.5	10.3	3.9
Positive Photograph	144	4	2.7	10.3	3.1
Negative Photograph	144	7	4.8	10.3	5.4
TOTAL	432	16	3.7	30.9	12.4
GRAND TOTAL	1,398	129	9.2	100.0	100.0

* Not classified according to donation range

The responses to individual questionnaire questions are reported in Tables 6 to 12. While the tables present only those questions which relate directly to the photograph issue, Appendix D includes responses to all remaining questions. All of the 129 returned questionnaires were incorporated into the final analysis, in spite of the fact that some of them were incomplete. For the most part, item omission seemed to relate to the respondent's age (those over 70 years old tended to omit more questions) or purpose (those using the questionnaire primarily to vent frustrations i.e. concerning the number of appeals sent annually, also tended to omit more items). The nature of certain questions (those presenting choices) also accounted for some variation in response frequency. Comparisons between groups were therefore made with caution where sizeable frequency differences existed. Percentages reported in Tables 6 to 12 are based on the number of respondents who actually answered the question (listed under 'n' in each Table).

While questionnaire data are also referred to more specifically in the following analyses, it is important to note on a general level that respondents' judgments of the overall direction (Table 10) and appropriateness (Table 9) of the photograph used on their particular appeal confirms the positiveness, negativeness and appropriateness of the pictures selected for the study.

Analyses by Hypotheses

Positive Photograph versus No Photograph

Hypothesis 1: The response rate of the donor group receiving an appeal with a positive photograph will be significantly higher than the response rate of a donor group receiving an appeal without a photograph.

Comparing the overall appeal response rates of the positive photograph group and the no photograph group (Table 1) reveals that Hypothesis 1 was not supported. In fact, as indicated, the opposite occurred, such that there were actually 26 (.1%) more respondents in the no photograph group. Table 2 further indicates that while response rates of low and high donors were in the predicted direction, the overall results reported in Table 1 are attributable to response patterns of medium and previously cancelled donor groups, with the largest percentage difference (in favor

of the no photograph appeal) occurring in the medium donor group. As mentioned, it is also interesting to note that questionnaire response patterns closely resemble appeal response patterns in terms of the positive photograph/no photograph comparison, not only on a general level (Table 4), but also on a more specific level, especially where medium donors are concerned (Table 5).

Hypothesis 2: The average financial contribution of the donor group receiving an appeal with a positive photograph will be significantly higher than the average financial contribution of a donor group receiving an appeal without a photograph.

A comparison of the overall average financial contributions of the positive photograph group and the no photograph group (Table 1) reveals that Hypothesis 2 was quantitatively supported, for while the difference was relatively small (\$1.94 higher for the positive photograph group), it was in the predicted direction. Total financial contributions of the two groups also differed only slightly (\$926.00) but again in favor of the positive treatment. On a more detailed level (Table 2), the data indicates that financial results reported in Table 1 are largely attributable to high donors, who gave a total of \$3,179.00 more in the positive photograph condition than in the no photograph condition. Because response rates of this group were virtually equal in the two conditions, it is valid to compare average gifts (\$20.08 more for the positive group) at this level. Larger variances in response rates make similar comparisons in other groups less meaningful.

Overall results in terms of hypotheses 1 and 2 thus seem to indicate that while donors in the no photograph condition responded more, they actually contributed less. Given the magnitude of the total figures involved (Table 1), it is, however, more realistic to conclude that donors did not, on the whole, seem to be differentially affected by whether their appeal had a positive photograph or no photograph. Thus while hypothesis 2 was quantitatively supported, the small financial differences would, from World Vision's perspective, be considered insignificant in practical terms (Burnham, 1990). Differences existing at more detailed levels (as pointed out using Table 2) could nevertheless lead to future testing, given the fact that high and particularly medium donors were responsible for a large percentage of responses and contributions to the appeal (Table 3).

The questionnaire data relevant to the positive photograph versus no photograph issue perhaps contribute to an understanding of why performance in the no photograph condition basically equalled performance in the positive photograph condition. While respondents in the no photograph condition expressed some support for the general use of photographs (Table 6), a relatively high percentage claimed they often didn't take notice of them (Table 7). In terms of the specific appeal used for this study, most no photograph questionnaire respondents indicated that they did not even look for a photograph. None of them, furthermore, were disappointed by the lack of one (lower half of Table 8). Most respondents in this group also felt that a photograph of a child would not influence their response decision either way (lower half of Table 11). Of those who offered additional comments, well over half remarked that they did not require a photograph to make their decisions, many of them suggesting that the money used on photographs should instead be used to help the needy in more direct ways. The no photograph group's responses and contributions to the appeal (Table 1) would tend to confirm the accuracy of these statements, thereby lending further support to the finding that donors did not seem to be differentially affected by whether a direct mail fund raising appeal had a positive photograph or no photograph.

Negative Photograph versus No Photograph

Hypothesis 3: The response rate of the donor group receiving an appeal with a negative photograph will be significantly higher than the response rate of a donor group receiving an appeal without a photograph.

A comparison of the overall appeal response rates between the negative photograph group and the no photograph group (Table 1) reveals that Hypothesis 3 was not supported. As was the case with Hypotheses 1, the opposite of what was predicted actually occurred, such that there were 32 more respondents (.2%) in the no photograph condition than in the negative photograph condition. This trend existed at all donation levels (Table 2) except among medium donors, where, despite a small response frequency difference in the predicted direction, response rates were equal. The largest percentage differences (in favor of the no photograph condition) occurred among high

donors and previously cancelled donors, response rates for the no photograph group being in both cases .6% higher than response rates for the negative photograph group. While these percentages might not carry the same weight in practical terms, as previously cancelled donors constituted the smallest proportion of overall responses (Table 3), results must be evaluated as part of the total context, in which the difference between response rates (.2%) was minimal. It is nevertheless noteworthy that questionnaire response patterns were once again similar to appeal response patterns on a general (Table 4) and more specific level (Table 5), the only difference occurring among previously cancelled donors, where the response rate was higher in the negative condition.

Hypothesis 4: The average financial contribution of the donor group receiving an appeal with a negative photograph will be significantly higher than the average financial contribution of a donor group receiving an appeal without a photograph.

Comparing the overall average financial contributions of the negative photograph group and the no photograph group (Table 1) reveals that Hypothesis 4 was not supported. Here too, results were in the opposite direction of what was predicted. Although the difference in total financial contributions was substantially larger than that existing between the positive photograph and no photograph groups (\$2,261.00 as compared to \$926.00), due to the interdependence between response rates and financial contributions, the difference in average gifts was smaller (only \$.71 in favor of the no photograph group). At the level of donation groups (Table 2), it becomes clear that the final differences in total contributions presented in Table 1 would have been even greater (in favor of the no photograph group) had it not been for the high donors, who, by giving more in the negative condition than in the no photo condition, decreased initial differences by 45%. While the relationship between responses and contributions accounts for the large variation in average gifts for this donation group, their ability to influence overall results can not be undermined.

Despite some potentially significant differences existing at more detailed levels (i.e. among high donors), overall results of the appeal in terms of hypotheses 3 and 4 seem to indicate that donors who received the appeal with no photograph both responded more and gave more than did

those who received the appeal with the negative photograph. Thus neither hypothesis was supported in either quantitative or practical terms. Because overall differences were once again small in light of the total results (Table 1), it would seem that donors did not, on the whole, seem to be differentially affected by whether their appeal had a negative photograph or no photograph.

The questionnaire data which was highlighted in relation to the positive photograph versus no photograph issue (see pg. 44) is also relevant to the negative photograph versus no photograph issue, given the similar outcomes of these issues and the fact that picture related questions sent to questionnaire respondents in the no photograph group concerned the use of photographs as a whole.

Positive Photograph versus Negative Photograph

Hypothesis 5: The response rate of the donor group receiving an appeal with a positive photograph will be significantly higher than the response rate of a donor group receiving an appeal with a negative photograph.

Comparing the overall appeal response rates of the positive group and the negative group (Table 1) reveals that Hypothesis 5 was quantitatively supported. Table 2 reveals that response rates also differed in the predicted direction in all but the medium donor group, albeit by less than 1%. Overall questionnaire response rates (Table 4) did not in this case support appeal response rates. The slight frequency difference of 1 (in favor of the negative group) resulted in a relatively large response rate difference (.4%) primarily due to variations in the number of questionnaires initially sent. Small frequencies further accounted for seemingly large differences in response rates at more specific levels (Table 5). although here too, it is interesting to note that only one group, the high donors, responded more in the positive condition than in the negative condition.

Hypothesis 6: The average financial contribution of the donor group receiving an appeal with a positive photograph will be significantly higher than the average financial contribution of a donor group receiving an appeal with a negative photograph.

A comparison of the overall financial contributions of the positive photograph group and the negative photograph group (Table 1) reveals that Hypothesis 6 was quantitatively supported

Differences (in the predicted direction) between both total contributions (\$3,187.00) and average contributions (\$2.65) were larger than differences existing between any other two treatment conditions. Medium and high donors were largely responsible for the magnitude of these differences, as indicated in Table 2. The direction of average gifts among high donors can once again be explained by the interdependence between responses and financial contributions.

Overall results in terms of hypotheses 5 and 6 indicate that donors in the positive photograph group responded more and gave more than did donors in the negative condition. Both hypotheses were thus quantitatively supported. In practical terms, a response difference of 6 people (.1%) would not, however, be seen as significant from World Vision's perspective. The fact that contributions for virtually the same amount of people differed by a total of \$3,187.00 (2% in terms of overall contributions; 6% in terms of total contributions of the two photograph groups) and an average of \$2.65, would, on the other hand, have some immediate practical implications for World Vision Canada (Burnham, 1990). While differences were perhaps minimal in terms of the total results, it nevertheless seems that donors were, on the whole, more favorably affected by a fund raising appeal with a positive photograph than by one with a negative photograph.

Questionnaire data relevant to the positive versus negative photograph issue in many cases support thus help clarify the results reported in Table 1. While both positive and negative groups showed a strong and basically equal general preference for letters with photographs (Table 6), indicating that they almost always took notice of them (Table 7), questions concerning the specific appeal revealed some interesting differences. The upper half of Table 8 shows, for example, that although the majority of respondents in both groups looked at their particular photograph at the time they received their appeal letter, respondents in the negative group more often looked at the photograph before reading the letter, perhaps supporting the notion that negative photographs do have high attention value and can in fact provide more immediate gratification (Singletary & Lamb, 1984). Larger differences between the two groups were found in terms of their evaluation

of the photograph used on their particular appeal (Table 9). Responses to Question 11, for example, indicate that the positive photograph led to more overall positive feelings about having previously donated to World Vision, than did the negative photograph. While both groups generally felt that the chosen photograph was appropriate (Question 12), respondents in the negative condition tended to support this statement less strongly than did those in the positive condition. Reactions to the photographs (Table 10), while also similar, again pointed to a higher correlation between the positive photograph and the degree of positive feelings evoked. The ability of positive photographs to generally elicit favorable reactions can also be inferred from Table 12, which reveals that most respondents in both groups prefer an emphasis on positive photographs. As to perceptions concerning the persuasiveness of the photograph, most respondents in both groups felt it had little influence either way (upper half of Table 11). Of remaining respondents, those in the negative group showed more support/indecision toward this issue than those in the positive group.

Additional comments offered by respondents in the negative group included some minimal support for the idea that pain-evoking pictures can induce action. As one such respondent stated, "It hurts to see these starving children. I must help". More common, however, were those remarks relating to the fact that the photograph did not have an influential role. Interestingly, a number of respondents who felt this way nevertheless expressed an awareness of the emotional impact photographs can have i.e. "I tend to decide on what I read and facts, rather than the emotion conjured up by photos", or as one respondent put it, "A kid (child) was just placed on the letter to appeal to my emotion. Who is he? Where is he from? What are you planning to do for him?".

Less comments offered by respondents in the positive group related to indifference toward the photograph. Rather, comments like "it convinced me" or "it helped reinforce my decision" seemed to be more frequent. Observations such as "I'm glad to see this particular child is doing well" and "the photo gave a positive feeling of success in what World Vision is doing" would indeed seem to further support the results reported in Table 1, indicating that donors were, on the whole, more favorably affected by an appeal with a positive photograph than by one with a negative photograph.

TABLE 6

General Preference for Photographs

		% Response				
Question (11/14)	n	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Uncertain 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
I prefer letters that do not have photographs on them.						
No Photograph	45	11	9	36	37	7
Positive Photograph	34	--	--	17	65	18
Negative Photograph	35	--	3	11	63	23

TABLE 7

General Value of Photographs

		% Response	
Question (4)	n	Yes	No
In general, do you look at the photographs on letters from World Vision?			
No Photograph	47	68	32
Positive Photograph	36	97	3
Negative Photograph	36	94	6

TABLE 8
Value of Appeal Photographs

		% Response	
Question (3)	n	Yes	No
<u>Version 1</u>			
On the renewal letter you recently received there was a photograph.			
a) Did you look at the photograph at the time you received the letter?			
Positive Photograph	33	85	15
Negative Photograph	34	88	12
b) If so, did you look at the photograph <u>before</u> reading the letter?			
Positive Photograph	31	58	42
Negative Photograph	31	64	36
<u>Version 2</u>			
On the letter you received there was no photograph.			
a) Did you look for a photograph on the letter when you received it?			
No Photograph	45	20	80
b) Were you disappointed that there was no photograph on the letter?			
No Photograph	44	--	100

TABLE 9

Appropriateness of Appeal Photographs

		% Response				
Question (11/12)	n	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Uncertain 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
Question (11)						
The photograph on the letter makes me feel good about having been a partner in World Vision last year.						
Positive Photograph	34	27	53	17	3	--
Negative Photograph	35	26	46	20	8	--
Question (12)						
I think the choice of photograph is appropriate.						
Positive Photograph	35	26	57	17	--	--
Negative Photograph	37	13	65	22	--	--

TABLE 10

Evaluation of Appeal Photographs

		% Response						
Question (19)	n	Positive						Negative
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Please check the space which shows your reaction to the photograph used on the letter.								
Positive Photograph	29	34	28	21	17	--	--	--
Negative Photograph	30	30	23	13	17	4	10	3

TABLE 11
Effectiveness of Appeal Photographs

		% Response				
Question (18/15)	n	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Uncertain 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
Version 1 – Question (18)						
The photo influenced my decision: to renew my support:						
Positive Photograph	25	4	12	16	56	12
Negative Photograph	34	9	20	18	38	15
not to renew my support:						
Positive Photograph	18	6	6	5	61	22
Negative Photograph	22	--	9	23	45	23
Version 2 – Question (15)						
I think a photograph of child would influence my decision: to renew my support:						
No Photograph	42	7	24	7	38	24
not to renew my support:						
No Photograph	28	--	--	11	53	36

TABLE 12

General Preference for Direction of Photographs

Question (20/16)

		% Response		
When I receive letters from World Vision, I prefer an emphasis on:				
	n	Photographs of people who have been helped	Photographs of people still needing help	Both*
No Photograph	27	52	22	26
Positive Photograph	30	57	20	23
Negative Photograph	33	58	27	15

* While not originally presented as an option, 'both' was chosen with enough frequency to warrant its inclusion in this table

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Summary

In their efforts to optimize life for victims of poverty globally, relief and development organizations dependent on public support are only too aware of the need for compelling and persuasive fund raising messages. Effectively communicating the needs to those who can help is, in other words, a critical part of the solution to the problems of world development. While photographs are frequently used as a part of the communication process in this context, virtually no formal research has been conducted to determine their actual function or effectiveness.

This study was designed to address this issue within the context of one such organization, World Vision Canada. Specifically, it sought to determine the extent to which donor response would be affected by the presence or absence of a photograph, or by the type of photograph (one eliciting positive emotions versus one eliciting negative emotions) used in a direct mail fund raising appeal.

Based on relevant theory and picture related research that has been conducted in areas such as education, news dissemination and marketing (all of which are engaged in during the fund raising process), it was hypothesized that response rates and financial contributions would be higher among donors receiving an appeal with a photograph than among those receiving an appeal without a photograph, and that response rates and financial contributions would also be higher among donors receiving a 'positive' photograph than among those receiving a 'negative' photograph.

The overall results of the study (Table 1) indicated that photographs in general did not play as important a role as was predicted. Where photographs were used, however, it seems that one of a positive nature had a significantly more favorable effect on donor response to the appeal (both in quantitative and practical terms), than did one of a negative nature, particularly among high (large gift) donors (Table 2). The following discussion gives more specific attention to these findings, particularly as they relate to the relevant theory and research.

The Use of Photographs

The debate concerning the persuasiveness of photographs particularly within the context of printed messages is due in large part to the relative "inactivity of communication educators and researchers toward the special area of photographic communication" (Miller, in Tsang, 1984, p. 578). Despite the uncertainty surrounding the issue, there exist many examples in both academic and non-academic contexts, which testify to the "almost mystical" (Fleming & Levie, 1978, p. 249) communicative power of photographs, such that they have in many instances been responsible for changing people's knowledge (Monk, 1989), feelings (Roel, 1983), and even behaviours (Girvin, 1947; Huntsinger, 1982). Combined with the comparatively large body of literature which indicates that pictures attract attention to themselves and surrounding messages, this evidence would indeed seem to suggest that fund raising appeals bearing photographs would have a more persuasive impact on donors than would appeals with no photographs.

As shown by the overall results reported in Table 1, such was not the case in this study. Neither response rates nor financial contributions of donors receiving appeals without a picture were, in practical terms, significantly different than response rates and financial contributions of donors in either of the photograph conditions. More specifically, while the response rate for the no photograph group was slightly higher than response rates for photograph groups, total and average financial contributions of the no photograph group fell in between the total and average contributions of the two photograph groups. Only among high donors (those giving more than \$200.00) did both photograph conditions outperform the no photograph condition (Table 2) in terms of overall and average financial contributions, the trend not applying to response rates.

While overall results do not support the hypothesized relationship between the no photograph and photograph conditions, they are consequential in suggesting that the inclusion of photographs in fund raising appeals, a costly and potentially problematic process i.e. when suitable materials are not available (Burnham, 1990), is perhaps not as necessary as is intuitively believed. Some possible reasons for this can be found in the related literature and the study's questionnaire data.

Because the limited research related to picture persuasiveness has yielded contradictory results, a generally accepted conclusion states that "while messages including pictures are preferred and attract attention, the addition of pictures does not necessarily enhance persuasion" (Fleming & Levie, 1978, p. 249). Questionnaire data from the study indicates that the majority of respondents in both photograph conditions indeed prefer letters with photographs (Table 6), and, in the case of their specific appeal, looked at the photograph before reading the letter (Table 8), thus supporting the notion that pictures do attract attention. The similar performance of these two groups in relation to the no photograph group would, however, suggest that in spite of their perceived value, pictures truly did not seem to enhance persuasion in this study.

One possible reason for this similarity in performance (Table 1) perhaps relates to Culbertson's news study findings, which indicate that pictures can actually distract people from focal issues. Their very concreteness and specificity can furthermore "limit the images and associations which come into play in interpreting a message" (Culbertson, 1974b, p. 228). Thus, in the context of the current study, the implication would be that donors not having to contend with the distractions and processing limitations potentially caused by the addition of a picture would be able to focus more clearly on the needs and issues presented in the appeal, and possibly perform at a higher-than-expected level, while donors distracted and limited by a specific photograph would perhaps perform at a lower-than-expected level, the result being a somewhat similar level of performance between the no photograph and photograph groups, as was in fact the case. This conjecture conceivably carries more weight in light of the questionnaire results, for although respondents in the photograph groups suggested that messages with pictures are preferred and do attract attention, questionnaire responses of the no photograph group suggested that photographs are not even necessarily preferred (Table 6) or attended to (Table 7) to the extent fund raisers may assume they are. Could it be that the absence of a 'distracting' photograph led not only to these (possibly more objective) perceptions concerning the value of photographs, but also to the surprisingly high performance of the no photograph group? The possibility certainly exists.

Another potential reason for the overall similarity in performance between no photograph and photograph groups relates to emotion. The dramatic impact that photographs have had on people in various real-life situations (Monk, 1989) indeed attests to their emotional and persuasive power. While people are seldom aware of this power or their own susceptibility to it, many questionnaire respondents in this study expressed a high level of such awareness i.e. "A picture always has an emotional impact. It makes the plight of these people more real"; "A picture is better than words to evoke emotion"; "When I look at a face in a photograph I see either the pain and suffering or what our help has wrought . . . Photographs can sometimes stir our emotions more than words".

Although fund raising literature claims that emotion outsells intellect (Lewis, 1983), it also suggests that emotion be presented in a 'logical' manner (Van Groesbeck, 1982), given that many donors "pride themselves on being rational, in-control human beings" (Hemmings, 1989, p. 39) who believe they are "sending money for logical reasons" (Van Groesbeck, p. 38). This belief was indeed expressed in comments of photograph group questionnaire respondents i.e. : "A kid was just placed on the letter to appeal to my emotion. Who is he? Where is he from? What are you planning to do for him? Generally, I don't like a picture of a child just to appeal to my emotion"; "I tend to decide on what I read and facts, rather than the emotion conjured up by photos"; "Photos . . . don't instruct me personally as to whether I should provide support. This needs to be a rational decision, based . . . not on the amount of pain I feel in my heart at the picture of a hungry child".

While the appeal letter (Appendix B) was itself not devoid of emotion, advertising research (Hirschman, 1986) suggests that words are often associated with informativeness and utility and that language as a whole is equated with rationality. Organizations wanting to create an impression of "heightened rationality and factualness" (Hirschman, p. 33) should thus focus on using all-text communications. Such findings, combined with the apparent desire of donors to avoid succumbing to emotion, perhaps explain the close performance of the no photograph and photograph groups. The high level of awareness photograph groups had concerning the emotional power of pictures may thus indeed have played a part in preventing them from reaching higher levels of response.

The nature of the population in general may have also played a more prominent role than expected, concerning the similar performance between no photograph and photograph conditions. Having contributed to World Vision Canada at least once in the previous year, each member of the population was already a regular recipient of the organization's direct mail appeals, and was thus familiar with the format and content of the one used in the study. This familiarity may well have desensitized donors to responding differentially based on the presence or absence of a photograph. The fact that the largest proportion of suggestions offered by questionnaire respondents in each treatment group related to requests for less appeals per year, and in many cases for money spent on photographs to be used to help the needy more directly, would seem to indicate that a high level of desensitization does in fact already exist throughout the population. This, combined with the frequent exposure to world development problems also provided by other media, makes it quite likely that many donors would agree with the respondent who wrote "I see so much on T.V. of starving and devastation of people in this world that another picture doesn't mean a lot".

The motivations underlying decisions to give may also help explain the similar performance of the no photograph and photograph groups. While some questionnaire respondents connected their decision to finances ("We decide with or without pictures when funds are available to support"; "I do not require a photograph to make my decision. On my limited income, I know when and whom I am able to assist!"), others related it to World Vision ("The photograph doesn't have an impact. I support World Vision . . . because of the programs it is involved with"; "We are too much 'in love' with World Vision to let a letter or photo influence us . . ."; "We would continue our support in any event due to the good reputation of stewardship of World Vision"). The assumption that many donors would give due to yet deeper convictions was also supported by questionnaire comments i.e.: "The photo had no influence. I just believe we have to help the needy"; "God's spirit influences me to give"; "I feel it is my obligation to help people less fortunate than we are"; "My reason for helping is conviction from the Bible". Combined, these motivations may quite possibly offer the most insight as to why the use of photographs did not seem to enhance persuasion in this study.

The Direction of Photographs

"Photography is about pleasure and photography is about pain" (Monk, 1989, p. 19). Spoken by Walker Evans, a master of early documentary photography, these words bring to mind the dilemma often faced by those in development organizations who are responsible for deciding which pictures to include in a fund raising appeal. Although the 'negative' pain-evoking pictures depicting pipe stem legs, distended bowel and gaunt cheeks (Huntsinger, 1982) traditionally emphasized in such appeals have started to be replaced by 'positive' pleasure-evoking photographs depicting successful outcomes of social programs (Severn, 1988, p. 8), there is virtually no formal research in the fund raising context to empirically support the effectiveness of one approach over the other. Theory and research from a variety of related contexts does however indicate strongly that pleasure would be more effective than pain in motivating desired action.

While photographs on the whole did not seem to play as important a role as was anticipated in this study, (financial performance of the no photograph group falling between that of the two photograph groups), the *type* of photograph (positive or negative) did result in differences of a more significant nature, both quantitatively and practically, the positive group outpulling the negative one by a total of \$3,187.00, and an average of \$2.65 (Table 1). Interestingly, medium and high donors were largely responsible for these differences, high donors being particularly responsive to the positive photograph in terms of number of respondents. The overall financial differences (2% in terms of total contributions, 6% in terms of total contributions of the two groups) are especially noteworthy given that respondents in both groups were virtually equal in number and presumably equally represented (due to the systematic manner in which they were divided) in terms of, for example, giving motivations and desensitization levels. These differences would thus seem to indicate not only that emotion can in actuality influence decision-making, but more specifically that pleasure was in fact more effective than pain in motivating desired action. The fact that respondents reacted to positive and negative photographs in the hypothesized manner thus lends further empirical support to many of the theories presented in the related literature.

The common assumption that positive beliefs and emotions lead to approach tendencies while negative beliefs and emotions lead to avoidance tendencies (Bettinghaus, 1968; Fleming & Levie, 1978; Reich & Adcock, 1976), for example, seems to have played a part in determining the nature of financial responses of donors in the two photograph groups. While the similar performance between the no photograph and photograph groups serves to downplay the emotional impact of photographs as a whole, the differential performance of the two photograph groups seems to emphasize it. Despite priding themselves on their rationality, in other words, many donors do in fact seem to respond "viscerally – with their guts and emotions" (Hemmings, 1989, p. 39).

The approach/avoidance theory provides a useful perspective from which to interpret not only overall results, but also questionnaire responses. That each photograph elicited the intended emotions is demonstrated in numerous ways. Table 9 (Question 11), for example, indicates that a larger proportion of the positive than of the negative group agreed that the photograph made them feel good about their previous donations to World Vision, while Question 12 shows that those in the negative group felt less strongly that their photograph was appropriate. Reactions on a positive-negative scale (Table 10) further indicated that the pictures had essentially had the desired effect.

Research has demonstrated that information can affect attitudes toward both message and message source (Haskins & Miller, 1984; Hovland et al., 1953). Interestingly, the nature of additional comments offered by questionnaire respondents in both groups would suggest that the emotions elicited by the different photographs may indeed have had a subtle effect on attitudes toward both the appeal letter and World Vision as a whole. A large portion of comments from the negative group, for example, seemed to be of a critical nature i.e.: "The money spent on these excessive reports could be better spent helping the children"; "Your letters need not be so long – paper costs money and you use good quality – one page is enough"; "I want my money to help the poor not fill wastebaskets", while comments from the positive group tended to be more supportive i.e.: "It's good to hear what we're up against, what our donations are being given to, also to hear how things are being resolved . . ."; "The photograph gave a positive feeling of success in what

World Vision is doing"; "I was extremely elated to hear about the fresh water supplies which curbed the agony people endure due to the guinea worm". Although respondents in the positive group also commented on the use of financial resources, even the manner in which concern was expressed often seemed to be more positive i.e.: "No doubt if you sent out less literature and fewer mailings the support would decrease. But it would be wonderful to cut costs in order that more would be directly used for the needs! I am not doubting your accountability . . . just dreaming".

Questionnaire respondents in the negative group thus seem to have focussed more on negative aspects of the message and its source, while respondents in the positive group seemingly took more notice of positive aspects. In light of the superior financial performance of donors in the positive photograph condition (Table 1), these responses perhaps further support the approach/avoidance theory and potentially demonstrate the extent to which "anything associated with an unpleasant stimulus also comes to be perceived more negatively" (in Haskins & Miller, 1984, p. 4).

Pairing communication with a positive stimulus (in this case an attractive message source) indeed seems to have been instrumental in putting donors in a positive frame of mind ("I'm glad to see this particular child is doing well") such that persuasion was enhanced, as research suggests should happen (in Caballero & Pride, 1984). A possible reason for the fact that medium and high donors were particularly responsive to the positive photograph (Table 2) may lie in fund raising research suggesting that donors generally give to what they can most readily relate to, such that the elderly, for example, "are most likely to contribute to projects combating sickness and disease" (Barna, 1985, p. 54). The portrayal of a happy, smiling child able to fulfill his physical needs (Appendix B) may thus well promote a high level of identification among a donor population comprised largely of middle and upper class people, many of whom have disposable income.

Discussion concerning the performance of the two photograph groups has until now focussed mainly on the fact that the positive photograph group did, as was hypothesized, outpull the negative photograph group. The fact that differences between the two groups were not larger, particularly in terms of response frequencies, is, however, also deserving of further theoretical attention.

As Table 1 indicates, negative appeal respondents were only slightly lower in terms of number than positive appeal respondents. Questionnaire data (Table 11) reveals that of those who felt the picture had influenced their decision to renew their support (most in both groups feeling it had not), a larger proportion were in the negative photograph group. More people in this group were also agreed or undecided as to whether or not the picture had influenced them *not* to renew their support. Thus, on the whole, those in the negative group more often claimed the picture had been influential, perhaps explaining the (comparatively) high number of donors in the negative group.

One way in which the photograph may have been influential relates to guilt (being healthy when others aren't) and fear (of the poor and disadvantaged; of being punished for not giving), both of which are powerful motivators that often underlie donor response (Hemmings, 1989; Henderson, 1985; Jones, 1988). The fact that evaluations among questionnaire respondents in the negative group tended to be more negative would indicate that the picture may have evoked feelings such as guilt and fear in the donor population. Research claiming that guilt and fear often induce action because they stimulate the desire to reduce the discomfort and tension they generate (Severn, 1988) would thus help explain the negative group's high level of response to the appeal.

Conversely, the negative photograph may have inspired response in that it perhaps addressed people's latent need for negative news (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, in Tunstall, 1970). The fact that more questionnaire respondents in the negative than in the positive group looked at the photograph before reading the letter indeed speaks of the negative photograph's high attention value (Table 8). Negative group respondents requesting continued information about the seriousness of the situation i.e. "so that we can really see the pain . . ." were thus perhaps also representative of donors who in this case, may have responded to negative stimuli for reasons other than guilt and fear.

The similar response rates between negative and positive photograph groups may also relate to desensitization. The respondent who stated "I see so much on T.V. of starving and devastation of people in this world that another picture doesn't mean a lot" no doubt expressed the sentiments of many donors who have long been overexposed to the "starving baby appeal" (Severn, 1988, p. 8).

While response levels might indicate that the negative photograph led to approach rather than avoidance behaviours, or perhaps had no differential effect whatsoever from that produced by the positive photograph, contribution levels imply otherwise (Table 1). It did, in other words, seem to play somewhat of an adverse role in the decision process of many appeal respondents.

The fact that most questionnaire respondents in the negative group indicated a preference for photographs of people who have been helped rather for photographs of people still needing help (Table 12) would seem to support the 'pleasure principle' which, in the context of fund raising photographs, causes people to subconsciously turn away from painful or threatening images (Huntsinger, 1982). Thus while most donors would perhaps like to consider themselves immune to emotional appeals of any kind, the negative photograph may in fact have subconsciously affected the nature of their response to the appeal. More specifically, the adverse affects that negative information in general has been shown to have may have also operated in this context, causing donors "to become depressed, to experience a sense of 'helplessness'" (Galician & Vestre, 1987, p. 400) and to, in monetary terms, "reduce their helping behaviour" (Galician & Vestre, p. 400).

Photography is about pleasure and about pain. The extent to which related literature supports the assumption that positive emotions lead to approach tendencies while negative emotions lead to avoidance tendencies would indeed suggest that it was more than coincidence which in this study showed pleasure, as was hypothesized, to be more effective than pain in motivating desired actions.

Conclusions

The findings from this study indicate that donors are, on the whole, not differentially affected by the presence or absence of a photograph on a direct mail fund raising appeal. When a photograph is used, however, it seems that one which evokes positive and pleasurable emotions such as joy and acceptance may help generate a higher level of financial contribution than one which evokes negative and painful emotions such as anger and guilt. On a more specific level, it appears that donors who have a history of making annual contributions of \$200 or more do attach more significance to photographs, in particular to positive ones (Table 2).

It is interesting to note that some picture related studies in the field of advertising research have yielded results similar to the overall results of this study, such that the performance of consumers in no photograph control conditions fell somewhere between the performance of consumers in attractive photograph conditions and those in unattractive photograph conditions (Caballero & Pride, 1984; Nelson et al., 1988). While this may imply that the current findings perhaps apply to a larger population and context than that involved in the study, generalizations should, for a number of reasons, be made with caution. Although fund raising literature does indicate that donors as a whole share many characteristics, it must be remembered, for example, that the donor population in this study was comprised of previous givers (many from the religious community) who were already familiar with the approach of one specific organization. The same treatment conditions sent to people outside of that population (particularly if they were not previous donors) may therefore have yielded different results. The fact that the study involved only one of many possible communication mediums also limits its generalizability. However, in light of the large numbers involved, it is possible that fund raisers in other organizations and contexts could very likely gain some useful insights from the study's appeal and questionnaire data.

Practical Implications

While the small quantitative differences between the no photograph and photograph conditions may seem insignificant, the practical implications of these slight differences are in fact important to World Vision Canada, given that the addition of photographs to fund raising appeals is costly and at times difficult i.e. when suitable materials are not available (Burnham, 1990). Because this study was conducted on such a large scale and involved a population rather than a sample, it is realistic for the organization to immediately begin placing less emphasis on photographs in mail appeals sent to English-speaking Single Gift donors and similar members of their constituency.

When photographs *are* used, it is furthermore realistic to suggest that they be positive rather than negative in nature, a decision which may have particularly significant consequences in those fund raising campaigns specifically directed at large gift donors.

Having previously had no guidelines on which to base picture related decisions (Burnham, 1990), World Vision Canada thus has somewhat more than the "much-quoted but little understood maxim that a picture is worth a thousand words" (Culbertson, 1974a, p. 79) to direct them concerning not only the need for photographs but also the kind of photographs that should be used and *taken* in the future. The possibility that this guidance can indirectly provide more assistance to those most needing it, is, in the last instance, the study's most important practical implication.

Future Directions

While it is impractical for World Vision Canada to repeatedly conduct large-scale picture related tests (Burnham, 1990), the potential financial benefits of using photographs less often and more appropriately will hopefully demonstrate that costs of misdirected mailings are often higher than costs related to testing (Burnett, 1982), and that a better understanding of a target audience can truly enhance communication and campaign effectiveness (Severn, 1988). A smaller-scale study in which the function of photographs is examined in a similar or related manner (i.e. the use of both a negative and positive ['before' and 'after'] photograph in the same appeal was suggested by numerous questionnaire respondents) would perhaps provide useful additional information.

Because effective communication depends on more than photograph related issues, it would also be most useful for World Vision Canada to test other aspects of their direct mail appeals. Specifically, it would be beneficial to compare the effects of 'pleasure' and 'pain' in terms of text. Knowing the effects of sending less appeals would also be advantageous, given the extent to which questionnaire respondents tended to associate frequency of appeals with misused resources.

This study dealt specifically with the function of photographs in a fund raising appeal used by one organization. Its findings and implications, however, can potentially provide a springboard for related research in broader contexts, such that those concerned about optimizing human life can be yet more effective in their efforts to provide a future for those who may otherwise have none.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Photograph Selection Pretest

Positive Photographs

Negative Photographs

PHOTOGRAPH TEST

Participant Information: Age: _____ Sex: _____

POSITIVE PHOTOGRAPHS

* Rank the four positive photographs according to the positive emotional response they evoke in you:

#1. Most positive photo (to you): _____

#2. Second most positive photo (to you): _____

#3. Third most positive photo (to you): _____

#4. Fourth most positive photo (to you): _____

NEGATIVE PHOTOGRAPHS

* Rank the four negative photographs according to the negative emotional response they evoke in you:

#1. Most negative photo (to you): _____

#2. Second most negative photo (to you): _____

#3. Third most negative photo (to you): _____

#4. Fourth most negative photo (to you): _____

MATCHED PHOTOGRAPHS

* For each positive photograph, find a negative photograph that you feel best 'matches' it, keeping in mind some of the following criteria:

- photos should produce the same 'extremity' of emotion in you
- children should be as similar as possible (i.e. age, distance from camera etc.)
- photos should be as similar as possible (i.e. quality, background, contrast)

Positive Photo

A

B

C

D

Matching Negative Photo

* Now rank these matches, from most to least emotionally 'powerful' to you:

#1. Most powerful match (to you): _____ with _____

#2. Second most powerful match (to you): _____ with _____

#3. Third most powerful match (to you) : _____ with _____

#4. Fourth most powerful match (to you): _____ with _____

Comments: (Use reverse side if needed)

POSITIVE PHOTOGRAPHS



PHOTOGRAPH "A"



PHOTOGRAPH "B"



PHOTOGRAPH "C"



PHOTOGRAPH "D"

NEGATIVE PHOTOGRAPHS



PHOTOGRAPH "E"



PHOTOGRAPH "F"



PHOTOGRAPH "G"



PHOTOGRAPH "H"

APPENDIX B

Appeal Letter – No Photograph Version

Appeal Letter – Positive Photograph Version

Appeal Letter – Negative Photograph Version

December 28, 1989

Dear Caring Friend,

At the beginning of this new year, I'm writing to thank you for your past support and to ask you to renew your support to help suffering children through World Vision.

Last year, thanks to the generosity of friends like you, we helped more than 17 million needy people in over 80 countries. Those who benefited most were children. Your gifts promised them a better future.

- o In Bangladesh, the homes of hundreds of thousands of children and adults were completely washed away. But with your help we built homes and we provided clothing, and medicine -- bringing hope to 64,000 desperate families.
- o In war-torn Mozambique, you helped us take Crisis Survival Packs to more than 50,000 families -- which will allow them to plant food to feed their children.
- o In Ghana, you helped us drill more than 200 wells -- giving 35,000 children and adults clean water . . . good health . . . and more productive farming. For many families, this clean water means this is the first year they have not been stricken with the dreaded guinea worm disease.
- o In Sudan, famine and a devastating war have led to starvation and horrible suffering. Even as I write this letter 3,000 metric tonnes of emergency food is being delivered.

Despite these successes, millions of children still need help. So I'm asking you to reaffirm your commitment to help sick, hungry, helpless children through World Vision this new year.

- o We need to deliver an additional 90,000 Crisis Survival Packs to families in Mozambique who have been driven from their homes by the armed bandits -- many of the children have seen one or both of their parents murdered.
- o In Sudan, in spite of our emergency efforts 160,000 families are in urgent need of emergency food. They are starving. They need the help you can provide!
- o In the Commonwealth, a child is dying every four seconds -- from preventable diseases like tuberculosis, whooping cough, diarrhea. We must provide health care teams -- nutritionists, nurses -- and vehicles -- to deliver

(over please)

December 28, 1989

Dear Caring Friend,

At the beginning of this new year, I'm writing to thank you for your past support and to ask you to renew your support to help suffering children through World Vision.

Last year, thanks to the generosity of friends like you, we helped more than 17 million needy people in over 80 countries. Those who benefited most were children. Your gifts promised them a better future.

- o In Bangladesh, the homes of hundreds of thousands of children and adults were completely washed away. But with your help we built homes and we provided clothing, and medicine -- bringing hope to 64,000 desperate families.
- o In war-torn Mozambique, you helped us take Crisis Survival Packs to more than 50,000 families -- which will allow them to plant food to feed their children.
- o In Ghana, you helped us drill more than 200 wells -- giving 35,000 children and adults clean water . . . good health . . . and more productive farming. For many families, this clean water means this is the first year they have not been stricken with the dreaded guinea worm disease.
- o In Sudan, famine and a devastating war have led to starvation and horrible suffering. Even as I write this letter 3,000 metric tonnes of emergency food is being delivered.

Despite these successes, millions of children still need help. So I'm asking you to reaffirm your commitment to help sick, hungry, helpless children through World Vision's new year.

- o We need to deliver an additional 90,000 Crisis Survival Packs to families in Mozambique who have been driven from their homes by the armed bandits -- many of the children have seen one or both of their parents murdered.
- o In Sudan, in spite of our emergency efforts 160,000 families are in urgent need of emergency food. They are starving. They need the help you can provide!
- o In the Commonwealth, a child is dying every four seconds -- from preventable diseases like tuberculosis, whooping cough, diarrhea. We must provide health care teams -- nutritionists, nurses -- and vehicles -- to deliver

(over please)

December 28, 1989

Dear Caring Friend,

At the beginning of this new year, I'm writing to thank you for your past support and to ask you to renew your support to help suffering children through World Vision.

Last year, thanks to the generosity of friends like you, we helped more than 17 million needy people in over 80 countries. Those who benefited most were children. Your gifts promised them a better future.

- o In Bangladesh, the homes of hundreds of thousands of children and adults were completely washed away. But with your help we built homes and we provided clothing, and medicine -- bringing hope to 64,000 desperate families.
- o In war-torn Mozambique, you helped us take Crisis Survival Packs to more than 50,000 families -- which will allow them to plant food to feed their children.
- o In Ghana, you helped us drill more than 200 wells -- giving 35,000 children and adults clean water . . . good health . . . and more productive farming. For many families, this clean water means this is the first year they have not been stricken with the dreaded guinea worm disease.
- o In Sudan, famine and a devastating war have led to starvation and horrible suffering. Even as I write this letter 3,000 metric tonnes of emergency food is being delivered.

Despite these successes, millions of children still need help. So I'm asking you to reaffirm your commitment to help sick, hungry, helpless children through World Vision this new year.

- o We need to deliver an additional 90,000 Crisis Survival Packs to families in Mozambique who have been driven from their homes by the armed bandits -- many of the children have seen one or both of their parents murdered.
- o In Sudan, in spite of our emergency efforts 160,000 families are in urgent need of emergency food. They are starving. They need the help you can provide!
- o In the Commonwealth, a child is dying every four seconds -- from preventable diseases like tuberculosis, whooping cough, diarrhea. We must provide health care teams -- nutritionists, nurses -- and vehicles -- to deliver

(over please)

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire Cover Letter

Questionnaire Version 1 (Photograph)

Questionnaire Version 2 (No Photograph)

OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

90

Please circle the number that best describes your response to the following questions and statements:

	<u>Thoroughly</u>	<u>Briefly</u>	<u>Not at All</u>
1. Recently you received a renewal letter from World Vision. Prior to opening this questionnaire, had you read the letter?	1	2	3
2. In general, do you read the letters you receive from World Vision?	1	2	3
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
3. On the renewal letter you recently received, there was a photograph. a) Did you look at the photograph at the time you received the letter?		1	2
b) If so, did you look at the photograph <u>before</u> reading the letter?		1	2
4. In general, do you look at the photographs on letters from World Vision?		1	2

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Uncertain</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
5. The renewal letter makes me feel good about having been a partner in World Vision last year.	1	2	3	4	5
6. To me, the overall tone of the letter is very positive.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I think that the letter contains too many statistical facts.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The tone of the letter is too emotional for my liking.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I appreciate the underlining of key sentences in the letter.	1	2	3	4	5
10. In my opinion, the letter is too long.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The photograph on the letter makes me feel good about having been a partner in World Vision last year.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I think the choice of photograph is appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The photo would be more effective if shown on the 1st page.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I prefer letters that do not have photographs on them.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Before opening the letter, I had decided to give my support.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Before opening the letter, I had decided not to give support.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The letter influenced my decision: to renew my support.	1	2	3	4	5
: not to renew my support.	1	2	3	4	5

Please explain: _____

18. The photo influenced my decision: to renew my support.	1	2	3	4	5
: not to renew my support.	1	2	3	4	5

Please explain: _____

(Over, please)

19. Please check the space which shows your reaction to the photograph used on the letter:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Positive _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Negative

20. When I receive letters from World Vision, I prefer an emphasis on: (Check 1 from each group)

- a) reports of people still needing help _____
 reports of people who have been helped _____
- b) photographs of people who have been helped _____
 photographs of people still needing help _____

** My suggestions for how World Vision might increase effectiveness of their letters and photographs:

Please check the appropriate spaces:

Sex: _____ M _____ F Age: _____ Under 45 _____ 45-64 _____ Over 65

This information will help us make more specific observations about people's responses.
 Thank you for providing it. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential.
 Please place the questionnaire in the postage paid reply envelope and mail it right away.

Thank you for your cooperation!

OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please circle the number that best describes your response to the following questions and statements:

	<u>Thoroughly</u>	<u>Briefly</u>	<u>Not at All</u>
1. Recently you received a renewal letter from World Vision. Prior to opening this questionnaire, had you read the letter?	1	2	3
2. In general, do you read the letters you receive from World Vision?	1	2	3
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
3. On the letter you recently received, there was no photograph. a) Did you look for a photograph on the letter when you received it?		1	2
b) Were you disappointed that there was no photograph on the letter?		1	2
4. In general, do you look at the photographs on letters from World Vision?		1	2

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Uncertain</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
5. The renewal letter makes me feel good about having been a partner in World Vision last year.	1	2	3	4	5
6. To me, the overall tone of the letter is very positive.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I think that the letter contains too many statistical facts.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The tone of the letter is too emotional for my liking.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I appreciate the underlining of key sentences in the letter.	1	2	3	4	5
10. In my opinion, the letter is too long.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I prefer letters that do not have photographs on them.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Before opening the letter, I had decided to give my support.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Before opening the letter, I had decided not to give support.	1	2	3	4	5
14. The letter influenced my decision : to renew my support.	1	2	3	4	5
: not to renew my support.	1	2	3	4	5

Please explain: _____

15. I think a photograph of a child would influence my decision:					
: to renew my support.	1	2	3	4	5
: not to renew my support.	1	2	3	4	5

Please explain: _____

(Over, please)

16. When I receive letters from World Vision, I prefer an emphasis on: (Check 1 from each group)

- a) reports of people still needing help _____
 reports of people who have been helped _____
- b) photographs of people who have been helped _____
 photographs of people still needing help _____

** My suggestions for how World Vision might increase effectiveness of their letters and photographs:

Please check the appropriate spaces:

Sex: _____ M _____ F Age: _____ Under 45 _____ 45-64 _____ Over 65

This information will help us make more specific observations about people's responses.
 Thank you for providing it. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential.
 Please place the questionnaire in the postage paid reply envelope and mail it right away.

Thank you for your cooperation!

APPENDIX D

Appeal Letter Questionnaire Data

TABLE 13

General Value of Letters

		% Response		
Question (2)	n	Thoroughly	Briefly	Not at All
In general, do you read the letters you receive from World Vision?				
No Photograph	44	30	59	11
Positive Photograph	34	21	76	3
Negative Photograph	36	33	67	--
TOTAL	114	28	67	5

TABLE 14

Value of Specific Appeal Letter

		% Response		
Question (1)	n	Thoroughly	Briefly	Not at All
Recently you received a renewal letter from World Vision. Prior to opening this questionnaire, had you read the letter?				
No Photograph	44	25	66	9
Positive Photograph	37	24	65	11
Negative Photograph	38	26	63	11
TOTAL	119	25	65	10

TABLE 15
Evaluation of Appeal Letter
Questions 5-7

		% Response				
Questions (5-7)	n	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Uncertain 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
Question 5						
The renewal letter makes me feel good about having been a partner in World Vision last year.						
No Photograph	47	11	51	28	8	2
Positive Photograph	34	23	56	18	--	3
Negative Photograph	36	19	61	14	6	--
TOTAL	117	17	56	21	5	1
Question 6						
To me, the overall tone of the letter is very positive.						
No Photograph	43	21	56	21	2	--
Positive Photograph	34	15	73	9	3	--
Negative Photograph	35	20	63	17	--	--
TOTAL	112	19	63	16	2	--
Question 7						
I think the letter contains too many statistical facts.						
No Photograph	46	--	17	20	59	4
Positive Photograph	32	3	13	16	62	6
Negative Photograph	37	3	8	22	62	5
TOTAL	115	2	13	19	61	5

TABLE 16
Evaluation of Appeal Letter
Questions 8-10

		% Response				
Questions (8-10)	n	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Uncertain 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
Question 8						
The tone of the letter is too emotional for my liking.						
No Photograph	46	--	11	24	56	9
Positive Photograph	33	--	18	9	70	3
Negative Photograph	36	6	17	11	58	8
TOTAL	115	2	15	15	61	7
Question 9						
I appreciate the underlining of key sentences in the letter.						
No Photograph	45	15	49	20	9	7
Positive Photograph	28	25	25	25	21	4
Negative Photograph	35	29	43	17	11	--
TOTAL	108	22	41	20	13	4
Question 10						
In my opinion, the letter is too long.						
No Photograph	44	7	20	29	39	5
Positive Photograph	30	3	17	27	50	3
Negative Photograph	34	3	26	27	41	3
TOTAL	108	5	21	28	42	4

TABLE 17

Renewal Decisions Before Appeal Letter

		% Response				
Questions (15/12; 16/13)	n	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Uncertain 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
Question 15/12						
Before opening the letter, I had decided to give my support.						
No Photograph	46	24	39	13	17	7
Positive Photograph	32	28	28	25	16	3
Negative Photograph	31	26	42	13	16	3
TOTAL	109	26	37	16	16	5
Question 16/13						
Before opening the letter, I had decided not to renew my support:						
No Photograph	41	2	15	20	39	24
Positive Photograph	28	4	11	18	46	21
Negative Photograph	29	--	7	17	48	28
TOTAL	98	2	11	18	44	25

TABLE 18
Effectivness of Appeal Letter

		% Response					
Questions (17/14)	n	1	Strongly Agree 2	Agree 3	Uncertain 4	Disagree 5	Strongly Disagree
The letter influenced my decision: to renew my support:							
No Photograph	41	5	27	17	34	17	
Positive Photograph	26	19	27	19	23	12	
Negative Photograph	31	10	35	23	29	3	
TOTAL		98	10	30	19	30	11
The letter influenced my decision: not to renew my support:							
No Photograph	30	3	10	17	47	23	
Positive Photograph	19	--	16	5	53	26	
Negative Photograph	23	--	13	26	35	26	
TOTAL		72	1	13	17	44	25

TABLE 19

General Preference for Direction of Letters

Question (20/16)

		% Response		
When I receive letters from World Vision, I prefer an emphasis on:				
	n	Reports of people still needing help	Reports of people who have been helped	Both*
No Photograph	41	34	34	32
Positive Photograph	31	26	45	29
Negative Photograph	36	50	36	14
TOTAL	108	37	38	25

* While not originally presented as an option, 'both' was chosen with enough frequency to warrant its inclusion in this table

TABLE 20

Effectiveness of Appeal Photograph Placement

		% Response				
Question (13)	n	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Uncertain 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
The photo would have been more effective if shown on the 1st page.						
Positive Photograph	32	13	22	50	9	6
Negative Photograph	34	18	23	47	12	--
TOTAL	66	15	23	48	11	3