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INOCULATION THEORY IN A DIRECT MAIL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN:
A CONTROLLED FIELD EXPERIMENT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to test empirically the effects of inoculation and forewarning on three separate populations in a direct mail fundraising campaign. Hypotheses were generated from questions arising from demographic data available on the populations as well as on prior research in inoculation theory.

Major findings were that, first, prior exposure to a persuasive communication one week before a direct mail campaign had a significant positive effect on the decision to donate. Secondly, inoculation, forewarning, and no prior message were equally effective in soliciting gifts from previous donors. Third, inoculation and forewarning produced equally significant increases in the rate of giving among previous non-donors. Fourth, inoculation significantly increased the size of gifts by previous donors. Fifth, female subjects gave at statistically equivalent percentages despite the particular treatment received. And, sixth, males responded at a significantly higher percentage to both inoculation and forewarning than to no advance communication.

Implications for future research include the empirical investigation of the same variables over larger populations, an exploration of the effect of time variables, and the application of similar research to other modes of fundraising.

PREFACE

Theoretical and Practical Implications of the Study

Much study in mass communication research has been devoted to the concept of attitude change. In fact, attitude change is a primary emphasis in mass communication research. Yet there is likewise a divergent branch of attitude study which explores methods of preventing attitude change. McGuire (1972) posited that there are five major approaches to preventing, or immunizing, an individual against an undesirable or unwanted change of attitude: commitment, anchoring, conditioned avoidance, personality change, and inoculation. This study is concerned with the latter, inoculation.

Fundraising for educational and non-profit organizations is a 43 billion dollar per year industry, with over 17 billion dollars given to charitable organizations via mail induced contributions (American Association of Fund Raising Counsel, 1980-81). With today's economic environment and with the expected diminishing of available dollars, any improvement in the technique of soliciting funds would be a welcome and useful contribution to the development field.

Too little experimental research has been conducted in fundraising and yet, because of both the research challenge and the important financial considerations/implications, it should be a most fertile field. This research was intended to combine successfully a concern for theory, research, and important pragmatic issues into a single study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the period 1961 to 1972, McGuire's inoculation theory received a great deal of attention and served as a focal point for much research into attitude change. Inoculation theory, simply stated, is the belief that presenting an individual with a weakened form of a forthcoming argument (along with stronger arguments supporting the desired attitude) will "inoculate" the individual against the undesirable, forthcoming argument, much akin to a biological inoculation against disease (Janis, 1951; Cohn, 1971; McGuire, 1972). McGuire's research, in turn, was based on the earlier work of Hovland (1949) in which he explored the two-sided, persuasive appeal in facilitating attitude change.

Inoculation, according to McGuire (1964), is essentially a pre-treatment or pre-message which will lessen the persuasive effectiveness of any given message which follows. Inoculation can take the form of either one-sided (supportive) appeals or two-sided (refutational) appeals. One-sided appeals are normally utilized when (Abelson 1959; Cohen, 1964):

1. The audience is already predisposed toward the desired attitude.
2. The audience is unfamiliar with the issue.
3. The communicator does not know and is not likely to know the opposing argument.

A two-sided appeal should be utilized when:

1. The audience is predisposed to disagree with the communicator.
2. Both sides of the issue are understood.
3. The proponents of the counterargument are better known than the communicator.
4. The audience will be exposed to some form of counterargument.

Unfortunately, research interest in inoculation theory has tapered off with many theorists content that other theories show more promise. This is regrettable because there are several distinctly fertile areas within this narrow band of attitude change that deserve further exploration. Additionally, there is relatively little literature dealing with such research; specifically, the use of inoculation to change (rather than protect) previously existing attitudes concerning controversial subjects (as opposed to cultural truisms), while simultaneously solidifying or at least not altering those concurrent, or underlying, attitudes which are deemed desirable by the communicator. The ramifications of such research are important from the standpoint of practical or utilitarian considerations, as in persuasion, as well as contributing to general communication effects research.

This study, then, concerned itself primarily with testing the efficacy of a prior two-sided persuasive message received before the primary communication or treatment, in this case a letter requesting a donation to Tusculum College. Such an experiment represented a novel use of inoculation theory in that, aside from its normal function of

preventing unwanted attitude change among those subjects already predisposed to give, it was used to initiate attitude change among those subjects predisposed not to give. Furthermore, unlike McGuire's studies, it dealt with a controversial subject (i.e., personal financial sacrifice as opposed to a cultural truism). And finally, it was an unobtrusive field experiment, with controls, as opposed to the closed environment of the laboratory setting, the site of McGuire's research. McGuire (1972) also came to realize the limitations of the laboratory experiment and called for "an escape from the laboratory situation to naturalistic communication settings in which numerous factors covary." The controlled field experiment, "an experimental design executed under naturalistic environmental conditions" (Haskins, 1968), is often far superior to the typical laboratory experiment in social research, and is far more generalizable to real life settings (Campbell & Stanley, 1966; Babbie, 1979). Furthermore, relatively little communication research has been undertaken to better define the specific problems in fundraising or to effectively test persuasive techniques in improving response on mail fund solicitation (and one must differentiate here between direct mail fundraising and direct mail marketing and/or mail questionnaires).

The conceptual thrust of the study was as follows:

The subjects were inoculated against those arguments they might hear from others that would support non-donation to the college. To continue the biological analogy, the subjects received an injection of "serum" (in this case weakened forms of the counterarguments for donating) that were designed to encourage their system to (1) develop a

psychological defense against such arguments for non-donation, while (2) not altering the behavior of those already predisposed to give.

Any two-sided message obviously incorporates two opposing thrusts or arguments. Inoculation, which is but one form of a two-sided appeal, contains weakened forms of the attitude(s) which the communicator wishes to discourage and more fully developed versions of the desired attitudes. This application of inoculation demonstrates that inoculation can be extended beyond its traditional role of strictly changing attitudes to include changing undesired attitudes while leaving desirable attitudes intact. As enumerated earlier, research has shown that when an audience is friendly, only one side of the argument (the desired one) should be presented, while when the audience initially disagrees with the communicator both sides of the argument should be presented (Hovland, et al., 1949). The two-sided appeal should be used when the audience is aware of both sides of the issue (Lumsdaine & Janis, 1953). Since in fundraising, and especially fundraising by mail, it is often impossible to accurately gauge one's audience (i.e., a major difference in the controlled laboratory environment and the "real" world), the construction of an effective two-sided appeal becomes quite challenging. Ideally, those subjects already psychologically predisposed to donate will be reinforced or, at worst, left unchanged by the inoculation. The research design in this study allowed for measurement of precisely this question.

This study proposes no new revelations in inoculation theory or attitude change; what is reported is a new application of the theory. Specifically, the theory was applied to the highly controversial,

challenging area of fundraising by mail and it was applied to a heterogeneous audience and a real life situation, as opposed to the homogeneous audiences, the non-controversial issues, and the closed laboratory environment of McGuire's earlier studies. And, as previously stated, such study should be valuable to attitude research in general and fundraising, be it non-profit, political, or commercial.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The field of fundraising, and in particular fundraising by mail, depends highly for its success upon the competent use of effective persuasive techniques. However, as the ensuing literature will demonstrate, there has been (1) little communication research expended in the area of mail fund solicitation, and (2) many professional fundraisers rely upon "seat-of-the-pants," or intuitive, methods in their fundraising campaigns. This is unfortunate for both the fundraising field and communication research. Such lack of research interest only guarantees that fundraising will remain primitive in its scope. Additionally, the return of money (as opposed to a questionnaire) is perhaps the ultimate test of the success of a persuasive appeal. That is, the return of a questionnaire often requires little or no financial sacrifice; indeed, the subject may actually receive a monetary incentive. And, in advertising research an expenditure on the part of the subject will at least result in the subject's acquisition of a product. In fundraising the subject garners neither of these rewards. As a consequence, the persuasive message must in and of itself be effective, resulting in an interesting challenge to the researcher.

There is a tremendous volume of research data available in the area of attitudes and attitude change. Numerous techniques have been studied and empirically tested for the purpose of facilitating (reducing resistance to) attitude change. McGuire's (1961) inoculation theory has proved useful in preventing undesired attitude change (i.e., increasing resistance to persuasion) through the use of a prior message, or stimulus, before the main treatment is received. The prior message usually contains a strong argument in support of the favored or desired attitude and weakened forms of the opposing undesired attitude, a two-sided appeal. The theory operates on the biological analogy of immunization or inoculation. The subject builds a defense against the weakened form of the counterargument, thus ensuring that his defenses are more formidable when later confronted by a stronger version of the counterargument.

Through the use of such techniques as inoculation, with some novel modification, fundraising by mail might be made significantly more effective. If significant improvement in the success of direct mail fundraising campaigns were indeed discovered, then there would be a very real contribution to the field of direct mail fundraising and, additionally, the area of persuasive communication research would be enhanced. If results are found to be not significant or even counterproductive such results would also be instructive and informational in both fields (fundraising and communication research).

Strengths of the Study

The value of this particular study is as follows:

1. New application of an old theory.

2. A "field" experiment as opposed to a laboratory experiment, the setting of most previous inoculation research (Beigel, 1973; Farkas & Anderson, 1976; Cronen & LaFleur, 1977; Burgoon, Miller, et al., 1978; Dipboye, 1977; Pryor & Steinfatt, 1978; Miller & Burgoon, 1979).
3. The execution of empirical research in an area seriously lacking such research.
4. A very practical contribution to an annual multi-billion dollar industry (fundraising for non-profit and for-profit organizations).
5. Suggestions for additional research to test other variables building upon this experiment (i.e., effects of inoculation on other populations or under different circumstances, time variables between treatment and measures, and other similar studies).

Statement of the Problem

This study utilized a series of controlled field experiments combined into a single research design to test the effectiveness of a direct mail fundraising campaign preceded by a persuasive, two-sided communication (inoculation) before an actual letter of solicitation. The message contained strong supportive arguments for donation and weakened counterarguments supporting non-donation. In question format the major problems examined were:

1. Will exposure to a prior message one week before the actual letter of solicitation (inoculation) containing strong

supportive arguments for donating to an organization and weakened counterarguments have any effect on the actual percentage of donations to that organization?

2. Will the effects (behavioral response) differ when the letter of solicitation is preceded instead by a letter of forewarning as opposed to inoculation?
3. What are the effects of inoculation, forewarning, and no treatment on giving decisions of previous donors?
4. What are the effects of inoculation, forewarning, and no treatment on giving decisions of previous non-donors (new donors)?
5. How do inoculation, forewarning, and no treatment affect donation size of previous donors (increase, decrease, no change)?
6. Are the effects of inoculation, forewarning, and no treatment different when applied to men and women (regarding decision to give)?

Hypotheses in response to these questions are stated in the methodology section of this study.

Delimitations and advantages of the research study: Internal validity (i.e., capability to demonstrate causation). This controlled field experiment possessed moderately high to high internal validity. Treatments and measures were unobtrusive with only the opportunity for exposure (i.e., the opportunity to receive and open one's mail as one pleases as opposed to the forced exposure more common in laboratory experiments). Though this may be considered an imposed delimitation,

it is in fact a desirable restriction. That is, one cannot consider a lower ratio of subject participation as undesirable or as unwanted, but instead as a more representative slice of real life response to specific, natural stimuli. As a consequence, the design allowed for the full demonstration of causation.

External validity (i.e., generalizability). The results of this experiment can, because of the researcher's purposeful delimitation regarding population size and identity, be generalized only to the populations involved. This would indicate high external validity for those populations directly involved, but low external validity beyond those populations. However, because most, or at least many, colleges possess similarly categorized populations, the results might be analyzed and disseminated to shed light on other related populations.

Other factors also enter into the generalizability of this study. Tusculum College possesses certain characteristics which may or may not be comparable to other institutions. Tusculum College is a small (historically 450 students), church-related, liberal arts college with origins dating to 1794. Certainly institutions which resemble Tusculum College would be justified in considering the application of these findings to their own institutions. Larger institutions may also find a direct application of the findings in this study since most colleges, as stated earlier, possess similar constituencies, no matter what their size. Thus, unlike the more usual laboratory or closed environment designs, moderately high external validity, or generalizability, does exist.

A situational, or environmental, aspect that may impact upon

generalizability is the time period of the study. The Fall of 1981 was an economically difficult and perhaps confusing time for many people. President Reagan's Economic Recovery Tax Act, which lowered tax rates, high inflation, high unemployment, and the close of the tax year may have all combined to make November and December of 1981 an unusual or atypical time for non-profit solicitation. Of course, each day is in some way different from any other day, but certainly the reader should consider these situational factors when considering generalizability beyond these populations and this time frame.

In summary, both situational limitations and researcher controlled delimitations were of minimal consequence in determining causation and generalizability.

Definition of Terms

Supportive arguments. Arguments constructed to persuade the subject to donate to the organization. These will generally appeal to the pragmatic reasons for giving as well as "psychologically stroking" the subject (affective appeal).

Weakened counterarguments. Weakened (less than fully developed) forms of the arguments the subject will be expected to psychologically construct for not giving to the organization (e.g., financial hardship, single donation will make no difference). In this experiment the researcher merely mentions the major expected arguments against giving and does not attempt to construct detailed versions of each argument. Instead, it is expected that each subject will, as the theory indicates, construct his or her own more precise, expanded arguments.

Donation. The return of a prepaid envelope with either a monetary gift or a pledge to give.

Simple forewarning (pre-message). Disseminating a brief message in advance of the major or more complete communication to follow, usually with no arguments included.

Inoculation. An attempt to reduce the impact of subsequent unfavorable or unpopular information through the use of a preparatory communication.

Two-sided appeal. A message containing, for any argument, both sides of that argument. In inoculation the favored argument receives the most space, time, or emphasis while the undesirable argument is represented by weakened forms of that argument.

Immunization. Generally speaking, the broad term for five methods of preventing undesired attitude change (see Preface).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitude Research

Though the concept of attitude has been an intriguing subject for study and discussion for over a century (actually, the term was first used by Herbert Spencer in 1862), the truly scientific approach to the study of attitudes may be traced to Allport (1935) and his formative work in social psychology. For the next fifteen years attitude research increased in popularity and was the focal point of both communication and social psychological research. In the 1950s group dynamics took precedence over attitude research, but this period soon gave way once more to the exploration of attitudes (McGuire, 1971).

Researchers have likewise struggled with defining the term itself and, expectedly, a wide range of definitions exists (Hovland, 1953; Festinger, 1959; Rokeach, 1975; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Oskamp, 1977). In the communication research field, the term "attitude" has evolved to mean a "posture of the mind" rather than a behavioral action (Oskamp, 1977). Allport (1968) posits that the major theme of all these definitions has been the idea of a "readiness for response." An attitude, then, is not a behavioral reaction, but simply a predisposition to behave in a certain way.

Other concepts related to attitude study are motivation (or the strength of an attitude) and the relative endurance (stability over time) of an attitude (Thistlewaite, 1974). Finally, by the 1970s

the "evaluative" aspect of attitudes had been recognized. Oskamp (1977) says this evaluative review simply means then an attitude is merely a "disposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to given objects."

Attitudes have generally been divided into three major areas, or components:

1. Cognitive--the ideas and beliefs which the individual holds toward the attitude object.
2. Affective (emotional)--the feelings one has toward the attitude object.
3. Behavioral--the individual's actions toward the attitude object.

It is, of course, not surprising that most modern attitude research into communication effects revolves around these three components. Furthermore, there are generally five ways of approaching the study of attitudes (Oskamp, 1977):

1. Descriptive--the study of the views of a single group of people, or a comparison of the opinions of several groups.
2. Measurement--attitude scales (i.e., Likert, Guttman, etc.).
3. Polls--public opinion polls (Harris, Gallup, Roper, etc.).
4. Theoretical--the study of the basic nature of attitudes, how they are formed, and how they are changed.
5. Experimental--the manipulation of a situation in order to create two or more different levels of an independent variable, thus allowing observation of their effects on the dependent variable.

This study is, of course, experimental and is concerned with a behavioral response that is reflective of a desired attitude change.

Attitude Change

Concurrent with the interest in general attitude research is the important research area of attitude change. In fact, attitude change has spawned far more research than any other topic in the attitude field (Oskamp, 1977). One of the leading categories of current approaches to the study of attitude change are the functional theories, initiated by Katz (1960), which examine the functions served by attitudes in meeting an individual's psychological needs. Lutz (1979) has borrowed four functions of attitudes from Katz (1960) and a fifth from Smith (1956) to yield five functions of attitudes. The first is a utilitarian function (reward and punishment). The second is a value-expressive function whereby individuals express their central values or self-concepts. The third is termed ego-defensive and, as would be expected, serves to protect the individual from external threats or internal feelings of insecurity (e.g., racism). The fourth is knowledge; that is, an individual needs order, structure, and meaning for his or her life. The fifth is social adjustment which makes explicit the direct impact of other individuals on a person's attitudes (i.e., reference groups).

Other popular approaches are the learning approaches, which incorporate notions of reinforcement, contiguity and stimulus-response and their relationship to the learning process; the conditioning theories, initiated by Doob (1947); and Bem's Behavioral Theory (1965), which stresses that an individual's attitudes follow or conform to

his or her behavior--that is, attitude change follows rather than precipitates changes in behavior.

Hovland, Janis, and Kelly (1953) were perhaps the most influential researchers in the attitude change field. Relying on a stimulus-response format, they examined the variables at play in any stimulus situation. The variables receiving the most attention were source variables, message variables, and audience variables.

A number of theories of attitude change grew from the vast volume of research that was taking place. Consistency theories (Heider, 1946, 1958; Festinger, 1957), which stressed the individual's need for a psychological "balance," congruity, or consistency between attitude and behavior; and dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957; Brehm & Cohn, 1962), which resembled consistency theory, were fertile areas for research. Also important were the perceptual approaches to attitude change (Sherif & Hovland, 1961), which posited that attitude change was a change in the way the individual perceived the object at hand rather than a change in beliefs concerning it.

Attribution theories have also gained immensely in popularity (Oskamp, 1977). Heider (1944) served as the catalyst for these theories which explored how individuals construct either external attributions (concerning elements in the environment) or internal attributions (concerning the characteristics or behavior of another individual). The greatest problem with these theories lies in the inability of researchers to combine the many fascinating but fragmented parts into a workable whole (Jones, et al., 1971).

This flaw in attribution theory, unfortunately, is indicative

of the entire attitude research field. In fact, the entire field of communication research suffers from the lack of a single unifying theory (though in fact such a unified theory may be unrealistic). The vast amount of research being conducted today, nevertheless, is simply an attempt by literally hundreds of researchers to add something of significance to the field in hopes of contributing to an eventual unified theory. Though great progress has been made over the past half century in better understanding how human beings communicate, it cannot be denied that the completion of our theoretical journey is not near. There remains a great deal of confusion and frustration in the continuing effort to understand communication and its nucleus of attitudes and attitude change.

Inoculation Theory

Much of the interest in "inoculating" individuals grew out of the research conducted by Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield (1949) in which they experimented with one-sided and two-sided communication. Their interest had grown out of similar studies during World War II when American soldiers were presented such messages in an effort to determine the best approach to take in convincing American fighting forces that the war with Japan would be a long and hard one, despite any communication they might hear to the contrary. Overconfidence, it was felt, would hamper the war effort, especially since Japan, a major enemy, remained undefeated. Results indicated that for men initially opposed to the new idea, a two-sided message was most effective in convincing them that the war would be lengthy and in countering any forthcoming, opposing arguments. One-sided communications

were most effective for those who already agreed with the initial communication or, as might be expected, for those who were less educated. Hovland, et al. (1953) for the most part simply applied these findings to the Korean Conflict.

McGuire and Papageorgis continued the research into the 1950s with McGuire fully exploring and expounding upon the possibilities of two-sided communications in preventing attitude change (McGuire & Papageorgis, 1961, 1962; McGuire, 1957). It was McGuire, in fact, who most thoroughly investigated this aspect of attitude change and from whom the term "inoculation," though the brainchild of Hovland (1949), became such a popular label for the process. Other researchers, of course, were also engaged in inoculation studies during these embryonic years. Abelson (1959) found that a two-sided argument was most effective when all facts on both sides of the question were well known, and when the audience initially disagreed with the communicator's point of view. McGuire's research, however, dealt for the most part with cultural truisms (e.g., brushing one's teeth is a healthy practice) and did not lend support for any influence when controversial topics were concerned. In fact, Cohen (1971) stated that with issues other than cultural truisms the results of such research might be vastly different; that is, an individual is more keenly aware that his or her more controversial beliefs are threatened and thus is motivated to assimilate supportive defenses. Incorporating such issues, then, could reduce or even reverse the effects McGuire found; that being, that inoculation is only applicable to cultural truisms (McGuire & Papageorgis, 1961). Steinfatt (1970) did extend McGuire's inoculation

theory to controversial issues, concluding that McGuire's insistence that cultural truisms are required by the biological analogy was incorrect. Further research (Pryor & Steinfatt, 1970, 1978) seems to support this departure from McGuire's original premise.

McGuire's position that his original theory is applicable only to cultural truisms is not the only questionable aspect of his approach (1961). The theory itself has met with serious challenge. Farkas and Anderson (1976) found no support for McGuire's explanation for the supposed effectiveness of inoculation. However, their results rested primarily on the premise that inoculation is indeed applicable only to cultural truisms and, additionally, like the researchers before them, their studies were conducted in the closed environment of the laboratory.

Cronen and LaFleur (1977) also found no support for McGuire's hypotheses. Citing the previous research of Kiesler (1969) and the alternative explanations he and his associates offered for the inoculation effect, these researchers contended that listeners are not motivated to develop an elaborate set of defenses. Instead, the subject or listener simply infers from the pre-treatment that all arguments against truisms are "typically weak." The problem with this explanation is that, despite the reasons behind the development of a defense, the result is still the same--inoculation has occurred! Granted, individuals are vastly different from one another, as is each situational context and each time period. And, as a consequence, effects may vary. But a small number of studies providing negative results do not kill a theory any more than a limited number of studies with positive results make one.

Too, Cronen and LaFleur overlook the fact that effects may result from a number of different causes. Simply because a particular effect was achieved by a cause other than inoculation does not invalidate the theory. Both bullets and arsenic can kill an individual, but the presence of one does not preclude the presence of the other.

In other studies, Crane (1961) discovered that explicit conclusions, with a two-sided communication, conferred greater immunization than a one-sided communication. Nelson (1966) cited the value of "linkage" of the desired attitude to an already accepted belief as a technique for immunization. Richards (1969), in a college admissions study, found a significantly greater positive effect on applications and inquiries when a two-sided communication with explicit conclusions was used than when a simple one-sided communication was used. In fact, the one-sided communication showed a negative effect. In line with McGuire's theory, this might be expected since potential college students might be more intelligent and possibly better educated than the average subject. Also quite relevant to the theoretical thrust of this study, Richards found a one-sided message--the usual form of a mail gift solicitation--actually produced negative results.

Beigel (1973) found that unfavorable initial impressions were more resistant to change than favorable initial impressions over a ten-day interval. Prediction on time effects are unclear according to Steinfatt (1970). It can be argued that inoculation may occur almost immediately or can develop over a period of time. McGuire (1964) predicted a non-monotonic, curvilinear relationship, rising quickly and then decaying over time, while Steinfatt (1970) suggested the effect

is relatively immediate. McGuire (1962) found that inoculation incurred by the refutational-same defense (i.e., arguments already known to the subjects, as in this study) decayed when defense and attack were separated by more than one week. Pryor and Steinfatt (1978) replicated these results. McGuire (1962) also found that resistance conferred by a supportive (one-sided) defense decayed even more rapidly. Finally, Mills (1966) found that manipulatory intent did not hinder positive attitude change when the communicator was viewed as liking the audience and wanting to influence them.

As one might have noticed, most of the studies involving inoculation reviewed in this chapter concentrated on a desire to extend the theory to its traditional role of preventing attitude change, though Richards (1969) most closely approached this researcher's interest.

Again, the thrust of this particular study was to utilize inoculation in its usual role of preventing undesirable attitude change, as well as to demonstrate that those subjects already holding the desired attitude (i.e., previous donors) will not be negatively affected by its application. Moreover, as has been shown, most previous research has been conducted in "closed" environments where measures were taken before subjects could mingle interpersonally, thus neutralizing any possibility of applying the findings to more natural settings. The research thrust here allows for full freedom in interpersonal interaction between the treatment and measurement.

If one can, then, accept the findings that inoculation does indeed increase resistance to persuasion, then one might also hypothesize

that inoculation can be useful in lowering resistance to persuasion, especially when the forthcoming two-sided message has been constructed with this purpose in mind. Though research has indicated that forewarning someone that he or she is going to hear an argument that will attack his or her position helps to increase resistance (McGuire, 1957; McGuire & Papageorgis, 1961, 1962; Freedman, 1968), there is no indication that researchers have contemplated the possibility that this same technique can be used to lower resistance. Actually, this can be expected in the sense that many people/communicators are particularly interested in blocking outside attempts to change attitude, rather than encourage such change. Too, the idea of preventing attitude change (if unwanted) may somehow seem more acceptable on an ethical basis as opposed to a blatant desire to sway an individual from a previously held attitude. Yet from the standpoint of those individuals or organizations on the outer perimeter of accepted or popular social/political/cultural/religious/educational norms, or for organizations seeking emotional or financial commitments from their constituencies, then an induced change toward their position would be most desirable. That was the objective of this application of inoculation theory.

The Development/Fundraising Field

There is a wealth of information/literature in the field of development; unfortunately, there is little use of empirical research to improve results.

To begin, three of the bestselling books in the educational

development field that deal with direct mail fundraising make no reference to other sources (Sheppard, 1975; Dermer, 1976; Keller, 1977). That is, advice and techniques (concerning psychological approaches, journalistic form, etc.) are presented in the first-person form with no empirical basis, no concern for related research, and on an "I'll tell you my sure-fire secrets" basis. The intent may be honorable, but the end product is of questionable value. And, as was so often the case, these writers possessed scanty foundations in social-psychology and other essential fields of knowledge. Granted, these individuals may have a great deal to contribute to the profession, but to follow their direction successfully is similar to repeating verbatim a three act drama, sans script or recording, after but one viewing. The profession desperately needs systematic, research oriented, testable hypotheses if it is to progress and ultimately record its progress as well as its mistakes.

As an example, in Successful Grantsmanship (Hill, 1980) the author discussed the need for a "research assistant" to maintain the library. Disappointingly, this library contains absolutely no empirical research data; that is, statistics on giving levels, biographies, and personal "how-to's" are encouraged, but there is no mention of empirically tested concepts in persuasion. The vast majority of the field's leading and most recent publications also followed this pattern (Dermer, 1980, 1979; Hall, 1980; Sharp, 1978; White, 1980). Sackheim (1979) perhaps illustrated most graphically the misunderstanding of the value of experimental research:

Too many direct mail people are addicted to the insidious habit of over-testing. So serious is the disease that,

where it exists in its most pernicious form, the unsuspecting victim loses his ability to think for himself, to judge, to make decisions, to act. His muscles of courage become atrophied and his power of discrimination calcifies. He believes the easy way out of any selling problem is to test. Why THINK when it is so easy to mail a couple of thousand?

Just what Sackheim meant by "pernicious" and "over-testing" was not made clear, for in his book Seven Deadly Direct Mail Mistakes he presented his seven sins with absolutely no supportive data. In fact, with no research Sackheim asserted that people will not read long letters under any circumstances. Yet the Public Management Institute (1980) stressed that a multi-page letter will outpull a single page letter 80 percent of the time, and a four-page letter will outpull a two-page letter 50 percent of the time. Unfortunately, the Public Management Institute did not present data to support its claim either. This may be a perfect example of the chaos in the field, though the Public Management Institute does have a thirty-one page section devoted entirely to testing techniques. In fact, this work may be the most thorough treatment on testing in the field.

Two additional semi-exceptions to this depressing dependence on intuition are Hillman (1980) and Fisher (1978). Hillman is important because of his reliance on statistical data for most assertions, as well as an unusual interest in history and trends (i.e., he suggested the importance of "predictive" data, though he did not actually use this term). Fisher, on the other hand, did not appear to be specifically aware of the potential value of social-psychological research or communication research, but he did seem to recognize that there must be some sort of useful, ready to digest knowledge "out there." He did, for example, encourage his readers to visit college and

university libraries, to contact university professors and research people, and to investigate indices of dissertation abstracts for unpublished research. Additionally, he recommended Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations (1978) and several books on mass media, journalism, and public communication. Unfortunately, this rather shallow approach was one of the few serious attempts at encouraging the use of communication research in the field by a member of the profession. Kotler (1979), though a professional marketing specialist as opposed to an educational specialist, has stated the need quite succinctly:

A genuine marketing response has been undertaken by a relatively small number of colleges. . . . By doing its homework on market, resource, and missions analysis, a college is in a better position to make decisions that improve student and faculty recruitment and institutional fundraising.

Educational marketing concepts are, at long last, rapidly being employed as evidenced by the increasing number of colleges and universities adopting a marketing concept. Hoppe (1981), though not specifically oriented toward fundraising and not at all toward inoculation, typified the new interest in the overall marketing approach to educational advancement.

Kotler's advice, of course, carries over to scientific fundraising based on sound marketing and communication research principles. In fact, Kotler (1975) in an earlier, classic work in the educational marketing field presented a fairly thorough section on survey research and its utilization; however, experimental research received only minimal attention.

There have been other relatively useful "how-to" works on direct

mail fundraising. Fellows and Koenig (1959) were pioneers in demonstrating the basics of testing as applied to the mail fundraising/development field, though they limited their comments to one brief chapter. Caples (1975) presented a rather thorough analysis of testing, but his work extended beyond the boundary of direct mail into general advertising methods and lost a great deal of the emphasis it might have had on the development field. McLean (1975) also presented a relatively useful guideline for testing, positing that there are generally thirty-one elements worth testing in any direct mail situation. The Direct Mail Marketing Association (1976, 1976) has also published several brief (2- and 4-page) publications on direct mail and copy testing, though their applicability to fundraising is questionable, primarily because financial incentives and tangible product marketing are unavailable to the direct mail fundraiser.

There is another work in the development field which deserves at least a cursory glance. Lindenmann (1977) specifically investigated the use of attitude research in a treatise published by C.A.S.E. (Council for Advancement and Support of Education). He explored the value of survey research (both descriptive and explanatory) in making an institution's persuasive messages more effective. Though his book is well grounded in the principles of survey research, he did not consider experimental research and, furthermore, did not explain to the reader how to make effective use of the survey data collected. Lindenmann contented himself with presenting examples of questionnaires used by other institutions with little guidance on their specific applications.

Finally, in 1980 a new journal devoted specifically to educational marketing was established. The Higher Education Marketing Journal appears quite promising in affording the scientifically oriented educational marketing professional a forum both to present original research and to learn from the efforts of others. Thornbury (1981), for example, presented a good case for the mechanics of direct mail marketing. Though this journal is still in its embryonic stage, it does hold promise to be a leading educational marketing research journal. Still, for the present time the research gap in this field remains to be filled.

The Communication Research Field and Direct Mail Solicitation

There is a great deal of information on attitude change in psychology, sociology, social-psychology, marketing, advertising, and communication. There is considerably less information dealing with direct campaigns at changing attitudes, and even less at direct mail solicitation of funds (one of the chief methods of institutional fund-raising). There are, however, some instructive research data on increasing direct mail response to questionnaires (i.e., non-financial solicitation). Erdos (1970) and Babbie (1979) presented good analyses of the difficulties experienced in the distribution and return of mail questionnaires.

In addition to the classic works of Erdos and Babbie, Ognibene (1970), Kanuk and Berenson (1975), Houston and Nevin (1978), and Walker and Burdick (1978) have contributed valuable insight into the research on mail questionnaires. Ognibene, for example, found that respondents

had different personality traits than non-respondents (they ranked higher in leadership, were more gregarious, and read more). Kaunk and Berenson found no strong evidence favoring any technique other than monetary incentives and follow-ups to increase the response rate. This, of course, is not good news for those who cannot provide monetary rewards. Walker and Burdick, in what might be termed a forewarning study, found that "previews" or advance notices via the telephone, mail, or postcards in thirty-three different studies had no effect on the response rate. Houston and Nevin, utilizing concepts of attitude change, found the highest response rate came with university sponsored surveys utilizing the utilitarian appeal (e.g., "Your assistance is needed!") as opposed to the egoistic appeal (e.g., "Your opinions are important!").

The problem, of course, revolves around decreasing the message or design inadequacies that tend to prohibit (or at least fail to encourage) good response rates. Quite often incentives (even cash) are provided to influence the individual to cooperate. Unfortunately, in direct mail solicitation the incentives are far more complex due to the nature of the request. The individual is being asked to respond financially and no amount of material "bait" can sway the subject to sacrifice economically unless he or she is psychologically motivated to do so. Yet, the same principle exists (behavioral response) whether one is requesting the return of a questionnaire or a contribution. And furthermore, rewards are offered in both cases. Postage free return, occasionally a monetary token or gift, and psychological stroking usually accompany the questionnaires, while the fund solicitation

letter is accompanied by a postage-paid envelope and heavy psychological stroking. Still, the degree of difference is substantial, and there is no way for an institution which is seeking to increase its annual or capital fund to pay for cooperation. It does not make sense and the subject, unless unusually dull, would not make a \$5.00 donation as the result of a \$1.00 gift incentive.

The number of researchers who have explored various techniques of increasing the response rate to direct mail questionnaires is, as has been seen, plentiful. The number of researchers who have examined attitude change and persuasion in general is, also as has been seen, likewise enormous. However, the number of researchers who have investigated the topic of fundraising via the mail is substantially fewer. To begin, Sturrock (1981) contended that fundraisers should expect no more than a 3 percent response rate via mail solicitations aimed at previous non-donors. Hansen (1979) compiled a rather complete sourcebook on consumer attitudes toward direct mail fundraising and listed some rather interesting findings. For example, according to Hansen, 51.3 percent of the U.S. population dislike receiving charitable requests through the mail, while only 7.4 percent like to receive such requests. A mere 2.9 percent liked very much being the recipients of the letters. Obviously research which would increase the response rate to mail charitable requests would be useful. Hansen also discovered that 65.3 percent of the recipients actually opened the letter, but only 16.6 percent read it thoroughly; 48.7 percent opened it, glanced at the contents, and then tossed it away; 30.7 percent discarded the letters without opening them. Some 43.3

percent never contribute, while 18.0 percent contribute occasionally, and 2.4 percent frequently. Hansen also found that younger respondents tended to have more favorable attitudes toward non-profit organizations, and that those most likely to contribute were better educated and fell into either the \$15-20,000 or over \$30,000 annual income ranges. Hansen's study was based on a random (proportional) sample (12,600) of recorded residential mailing addresses in the United States and the questionnaires were administered through four phases over nine months in 1976. Unfortunately, the response rate was only 22.5 percent, somewhat less than desirable, indicating an atypical population. This would also tend to suggest even less encouraging percentages for the entire U.S. population than those cited in the study.

Andrews (1976) found that seven of ten families in the United States had contributed, at some time, to charity by mail. Andrews in a later work (1979) encouraged testing in fundraising:

There are at least 600 possible variations in creating a fund raising package. About 200 of them have a direct relationship on readership and response. . . . There is no magic formula, yet it is possible to test for your answer. . . . Tomorrow's copywriter must be guided by research, not intuition. . . . The copywriter who is grounded in research has the knowledge to provide the winning margin.

Fund Raising Management Weekly (June 10, 1980) suggested that nonprofits avoid putting the full name on the outer envelope, avoid underlining, indent the body, and leave space between the paragraphs. It also suggested that appeals be edited down to thirty words, that the solicitor use regular typefaces, and that emotional appeals are superior to intellectual ones. All this advice was offered with no

supportive data and, as such, is questionable. For example, the Public Management Institute (1980) highly recommended underlining.

Related findings from the communication research field indicated that language of a moderately intense (emotional) nature best facilitated attempts at persuasion (Burgoon, Miller, et al., 1978), while low intensity language proved ineffective. Highly emotional language, on the other hand, proved detrimental to persuasive attempts, often resulting in the "boomerang" effect (Burgoon, Miller, et al., 1978). McEwen (1969) found that present tense verbs were more effective in initiating attitude change than future tense verbs.

According to Fund Raising Management Weekly (May 27, 1981) women are more likely to open fundraising mail than men (based on the attitude research work of T. R. Brushkin and Associates of New Jersey). Furthermore, and in conflict with Hansen (1979), those in the \$10-20,000 income range appear most inclined to donate to charitable organizations. The "best" month for direct mail fundraising is reportedly June and the worst is January, according to T. R. Brushkin and Associates. This, of course, makes intuitive sense as June is the last month of the institutional fiscal year and thus represents an intense period for last minute gift solicitations. Furthermore, January is the end of both a calendar and a tax year as well as immediately following the end of the Christmas season.

Finally, the Direct Mail Marketing Association (1981) reported that in 1979, \$19,748,200,000 was expended by all sources in direct mail marketing. Only a small percentage of this staggering amount, of course, was expended by educational and non-profit organizations in

their direct mail campaigns. But one can rest assured that a substantial amount of money was expended via direct mail solicitation to garner the 3.8 billion dollars given to colleges and universities in 1979 (Council for Financial Aid to Education).

Returning to the original concern with attitude change research, it can be seen that attitudes are extremely resistant to change, though opinions (the outward expression of attitudes) may be altered more readily. Without a financial or psychological reward, the response, or overt behavioral result, may be negligible or even negative. Selective exposure (Freedman & Sears, 1966; McGuire, 1968) may partially explain some of the failure rate, but one is led to believe that intelligent differentiation between successful approaches might cut down on the dismally high failure rate at changing attitudes (Mendelsohn, 1971).

Kelman (1961) posited that the communicator must successfully address one of three processes to change opinion: He (the communicator) must (1) invoke compliance, (2) create identification (a self-defining relationship between the communicator and him or herself), or (3) cause or influence internalization in which the individual accepts the proposed behavior as congruent with his or her own value system. This final concept is related to the consistency, functional, and social judgment theories of attitude change reviewed earlier (Heider, 1944; Newcomb, 1953; Rokeach, 1965; Festinger, 1959; Katz, 1960), in which the individual strives to bring his or her attitude in line with the prevailing or accepted standard. If this fails, according to these theories, the individual will disclaim the standard or previously

accepted attitude, or possibly even reject the individual holding the adversary attitude. It would seem that the development field, and in particular direct mail fundraising, might make use of such attitude change theories.

One could continue indefinitely in a review of research literature in attitude change and direct mail fundraising, but the point should be clear: there is an abundance of empirically tested data for the development officer to draw upon. Furthermore, there is some literature dealing with direct mail campaigns and a bit more on direct mail questionnaire techniques. However, there has been, relatively speaking, little substantial research in direct mail solicitation of funds (or if that is not the case, little effort at communicating that research). There appears to have been little effort on the part of many professionals at searching the literature for potentially helpful, related findings. Granted, there is a research gap in the most important aspect of educational fundraising and direct mail solicitation, but even the simplest research possibilities are being ignored by a great number of fundraising specialists. Despite the fact that some development professionals have called for a monitoring "of the outside world" (Keller, 1980), and an increased interest in communication research, it simply is not occurring in a substantial way. This study was an attempt to answer at least part of this need.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Choice of Methodology

There are essentially three basic modes of experimental research available to the researcher: the laboratory experiment, the controlled field experiment, and, to a lesser extent, the survey. The laboratory experiment offers high internal validity but usually low external validity; the survey possesses just the opposite characteristics. Campbell and Stanley (1966) called for more experimental designs applied to the natural (or field) situations where such designs are feasible and if extraneous variables are adequately controlled. Even if full experimental control is lacking, the researcher must be sensitive to and aware of the variables which the design fails to control.

Field research offers flexibility in that the research design can more easily be modified in mid-stream if need be, and is often relatively inexpensive (Babbie, 1979). The only formidable obstacle is the demonstration of causation, usually more closely associated with controlled laboratory experiments. However, by adding controls to the field research (i.e., the controlled field experiment), one combines the advantages of both surveys and laboratory experimental designs, while minimizing most of their disadvantages (Haskins, 1968).

The controlled field experiment seems especially useful in determining the effects of mass communications with the only disadvantages over either the one-shot survey or the laboratory experiment

being an occasional question concerning the accuracy of the execution of the research plan. In more than twenty other areas of comparison, the controlled field experiment either equals or surpasses its brethren (Haskins, 1968). In addition, the controlled field experiment allows for some evidence of the time order of the variables being examined, essential to establishing causation (Rogers, 1971).

In the early stages of research, it is often wise to observe the variables at work in their natural environment in order to better evaluate their characteristics before investigating them in an experimental situation (Anderson, 1971). Often, laboratory experimental research alone leads to an under-estimation of effects since the decisive factors (cumulation, ubiquity, and consonance) are not brought to bear in the traditional laboratory experiment (Noelle-Neumann, 1972).

For this study, the most practical blend of an internally valid design and an externally valid design--the controlled field experiment--was selected. Though unforeseen limitations could conceivably have been encountered, such was not the case. The researcher was able to effectively isolate the variables in question and thus rendered results which were generalizable to the largest possible population. Too, since the researcher exerted control over the independent variables and since an appropriate instrument for measurement was available, causation, at least in this specific experiment, could be demonstrated.

The Experimental Design

The research design for this study called for three separate controlled field experiments combined into one comprehensive design to

test the effects on behavioral response (donation) of inoculation before the initiation of a direct mail fundraising campaign. Additionally, the effects of forewarning alone were also controlled for through a second control (T2). This added control, which is actually a second treatment, is a safeguard against reading in causation as the result of inoculation when possibly any forewarning may have the same effect. Burgoon, Miller, et al., (1978) afterall, found that any message could affect the persuasive efficacy of a subsequent persuasive attack. A third traditional control ((T)) was introduced to allow for measurement of effects of both T1 and T2.

Three different populations ranging from 174 to 779 subjects each were fully utilized (i.e., random assignment as opposed to random sampling). Parents of students (258), corporate executives (174), and friends/non-alumni individuals (779) were considered and selected as ideal populations. All three groups tended to be low percentage donors, thus increasing the pragmatic value of their utilization in this study. Prior selection eliminated all duplication of names on these lists.

Population Demographics/Psychographics

Robert DeLay in the 1981 Fact Book on Direct Mail Response Marketing (D.M.M.A., 1981), broke human population markets into profiles termed as demographics and psychographics. Demography is the statistical mean of a population in respect to such variables as height, weight, population distribution, and other vital statistics. A psychograph is a character analysis (profile) of an individual subject. In this study, the researcher did not possess access to

demographic or psychographic information (other than names, geographical location, sex, and the giving record of the subject). Such items as income, age, educational level, and the like were unavailable. Too, it was ascertained that census data would fail to provide additional information on the populations in this study because the subjects were scattered. Census data become meaningless when, for example, only two subjects reside in a census block representing, again for example, one thousand people. There are, unfortunately, no realistic or empirically acceptable methods of correlating such demographic data with the populations at hand. Instead, psychographical information had to be limited to the information already in the possession of the institution.

There are, however, some assumptions that can be safely made concerning the populations in this study. First, the very fact that these individuals were on the institution's mailing list signified that they were of an income, educational, social, or business strata that could be expected to be of direct service to the institution. Also, because of these qualifications, they were undoubtedly in some way "above" the surrounding population mean in this characteristic (i.e., richer, brighter, better educated, etc.). It could also be safely assumed that the populations under study were substantially older than the mean age in the United States. All three populations (parents, business executives, and non-alumni friends) would tend to suggest a mean age of above forty years and possibly higher. DeLay (D.M.M.A., 1981) contended that direct response to mail marketing is generally concentrated in the better educated and older markets as

well as in those families with higher than average incomes. This finding was also reflected by Hansen (1979). Of course, one must not overlook the fact that the D.M.M.A. studies concentrated on the marketing by mail of merchandise. With fundraising there may be different results.

The Research Design

To aid the reader in visualizing the research design, Haskins' (1968) Notational System for communication research was utilized. This system allowed graphic representation of the treatments, measures, populations, and time periods under examination and lended itself well to mass communication research. In nearly all cases, the notational symbol used for a particular term, treatment, etc., was merely the first letter or letters of the word or words used to describe the situation at hand. This system was both logical and easy to follow, as the ensuing Notational Legend and Research Design demonstrate. For example, P1 was simply Population 1, in this case parents, while P2 was corporate executives, and P3 was non-alumni friends. Pla, Plb, and Plc, as logic would indicate, were three randomly assigned subgroups of P1. The same principle applied to P2 and P3, as well as to treatments and measures. The research design itself was partitioned into one week intervals and, given the above explanation, should be relatively simple to follow. Each t, for example, represented a time period of one week, with the total project (t1-t8) representing eight weeks.

The research design for this experiment is shown in Figure 1.

	t1	t2	t3	t4	t5	t6	t7	t8
P1a	T1(ox)	T3	M1....	.....	.....	.....	...M1	M2-6
P1b	T2(ox)	T3	M1....	.....	.....	.....	...M1	M2-6
P1c	(T)Fnx	T3	M1....	.....	.....	.....	...M1	M2-6
P2a	T1(ox)	T3	M1....	.....	.....	.....	...M1	M2-6
P2b	T2(ox)	T3	M1....	.....	.....	.....	...M1	M2-6
P2c	(T)fnx	T3	M1....	.....	.....	.....	...M1	M2-6
P3a	T1(ox)	T3	M1....	.....	.....	.....	...M1	M2-6
P3b	T2(ox)	T3	M1....	.....	.....	.....	...M1	M2-6
P3c	(T)fnx	T3	M1....	.....	.....	.....	...M1	M2-6
	Nov. 16	23	30	7	14	21	28	Jan. 4

Figure 1

The Research Design

Notational Legend

- P1 = 258 family units (parents) of Tusculum College Students.
 P1a-c = Three (3) randomly assigned subgroups of P1.
 P2 = 174 corporate (business) executives.
 P2a-c = Three (3) randomly assigned subgroups of P2.
 P3 = 779 non-alumni friends of the college.
 P3a-c = Three (3) randomly assigned subgroups of P3
- T1 = Prior letter of inoculation (two-sided appeal, explicit conclusion).
 T2 = Simple forewarning, no two-sided appeal, to measure effects of forewarning as opposed to inoculation (implicit conclusion).
 T3 = Letter of solicitation with prepaid return envelope for donation to college.
 (T) = Treatment withheld (i.e., no treatment).
 (ox) = Opportunity for exposure to treatment(s).
 (fnx) = Forced non-exposure.

- t1-8 = Periods of one week each, beginning November 16, 1981 and ending January 4, 1982.
- M1 = Return of envelope with donation or pledge of donation to Tusculum College, with firm cutoff date of January 4.
- M2 = Size of donation resulting from T1, T2, or (T).
- M3 = Effect of treatment on those who did not give previously (previous non-donors).
- M4 = Effect of treatment on those who did give previously (prior donors).
- M5 = Effect of each treatment and sex of donor on giving (correlation between sex and T1, T2, and (T)).
- M6 = Appropriate statistical analysis of each measurement above plus additional post-study examinations as were necessary to evaluate the data.

The design in this experiment allowed for three separate populations with wide geographical dispersion to be tested in an identical fashion. That is, each population was composed of individuals who had residences throughout the nation. This tended to lessen any atypical effects due to a particular geographical locale's own unique influences (e.g., a flood, localized economic conditions). With subjects geographically dispersed in a random fashion there was less likelihood of any single, extraneous factor confounding the results.

The independent variables were receipt of the letter of inoculation (T1), simple forewarning (T2), and no prior letter ((T)), one week in advance of the actual letter of solicitation (T3). A time variable of one week was selected based on the findings of previous inoculation research as discussed in Chapter II.

The dependent variable was simply the return of the prepaid envelope with a donation or pledge of donation (M1).

Each population was arranged alphabetically (from office lists) and a random starting point was chosen. Then subjects (in this first case, parents) were assigned, in order, to Pla, then Plb, and then Plc until the list was exhausted. Populations P2 (corporate executives) and P3 (non-alumni friends) were handled in an identical manner. An IBM Office System Six computer facilitated the random assignment. Each letter and prepaid envelope was coded so that upon return proper assignment to respective treatments and controls was easily ascertained.

Since mail solicitation is a continual operation at Tusculum College, the setting for this field experiment, there were few problems associated with access to specific populations, mailing material, or

secretarial aid. Too, as the researcher is the chief administrative officer in the development office at Tusculum College, adequate control over related administrative functions was possible. All letters were mailed at the same time to control for extraneous events (weather, mail strike, current events, etc.).

Analysis of Data

The data in this controlled field experiment are, as in many social science experiments (Mendenhall et al., 1977) enumerative data. That is, as opposed to ranked (ordinal) data, interval data, etc., this experiment simply determined whether an individual will donate or not donate. Additionally, this experiment is what is termed a multinomial experiment. Characteristics of the multinomial experiment include (Mendenhall et al., 1977) the following:

1. The experiment consists of n identical trials.
2. The outcome of each trial falls into one of k classes, or cells.
3. The probability that the outcome of a single trial will fall in a particular cell is P_i ($i=1, 2, \dots, k$) and remain the same for all trials.
4. The trials are independent.
5. There is an interest in $n_1, n_2, n_3, \dots, n_k$, where n_i ($i=1, 2, \dots, k$) is the number of trials in which the outcome falls in cell i .

One of the more useful statistical tests for enumerative data, as collected in this experiment, is Pearson's Chi-Square Test, resulting in the X^2 Test Statistic. This test can be expressed in the following manner:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{[n_i - np_i]^2}{np_i}$$

where (np_i) is the hypothesized average count for cell i , and n_i is the observed actual count for cell i . The resulting values may be compared to the critical values of Chi-Square (for significance), available in Pearson's "Tables of the Percentage Points of the χ^2 Distribution."

In addition to the Chi-Square value, it was also desirable to obtain the contingency coefficient, a value which indicates the strength of the relationship and is similar to the correlation coefficient used in such analysis as linear regression. The formula for the contingency coefficient is:

$$C\phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{\chi^2 + n}}$$

where χ^2 is the Chi-Square value and n is the total of all the values in the contingency table.

Finally, it was important to ascertain the effect of the various treatments on the size of donation. That is, does inoculation, forewarning, or no prior message most effectively guarantee an increase in donation size among those subjects deciding to donate? In other words, one treatment may influence subjects to give at the same or even a higher percentage rate, but their dollar increases may be negligible or a decrease may even exist. On the other hand, a second treatment may result in a much lower percentage rate of giving, but the average increase in the size of the individual gifts may be so

large as to make the second treatment (despite its lower percentage effectiveness) the more preferable alternative to the institutions more interested in dollars than in the number of participants.

Though only one measurement was taken during the experiment (i.e., this was not a planned pre-test, post-test design), prior records of giving are on file, which provided the necessary data to conduct either the sign test or the Wilcoxon signed-ranked test for nonparametric, correlated data. The sign test provides only direction of the change while the Wilcoxon test, often used in related sampling designs, takes into account the actual differences. The Wilcoxon test was used to analyze the change in the size of gifts. In each case the term "significant" was interpreted to mean significant at, minimally, the .05 confidence level.

Experimental Hypotheses

Experimental hypotheses based on research questions posed in Chapter I follow:

- H_1 : Among the total population (P1, P2, and P3) a significantly larger number of recipients of the letter of inoculation (T1) will donate to the college than will recipients of the letter of forewarning (T2) or recipients of the letter of solicitation alone ((T)).
- H_2 : Among the total population (P1, P2, and P3) a significantly larger number of recipients of the letter of forewarning (T2) will donate to the college than recipients of the solicitation letter alone ((T)).

- H₃: Inoculation will have no significant effect on the size of donation by subjects already predisposed to give (previous donors).
- H₄: Inoculation will significantly increase the desired behavioral response (decision to donate) among new donors.
- H₅: Forewarning will have no significant effect on the size of donation by subjects already predisposed to give (previous donors).
- H₆: Forewarning will significantly increase the desired behavioral response (decision to donate) among new donors, but will be less effective than inoculation.
- H₇: The effects of inoculation on men and women will not be significantly different.
- H₈: The effect of forewarning on men and women will not be significantly different.

Pre-test

An actual pre-test of the populations involved was undesirable since all elements of all three populations were to be included in the study to avoid bias. That is, a pre-test would unavoidably contaminate certain members of the populations who could not be eliminated from the actual experiment (i.e., maturation and/or testing effects). A pre-test was, however, conducted with a committee of the institution's administrative staff who critically reviewed the letters in regard to errors or inaccuracies which might have hampered their effectiveness or efficiency. Furthermore, committee input of this nature in lieu

of a pre-test has a precedent in persuasion research (Clark & Begun, 1971), although admittedly this is a judgmental procedure.

The Experimental Letters

The content/structure of the letter of inoculation and the letter of forewarning were gleaned from information presented to this researcher by Dr. Thomas Steinfatt, Professor and Director of Graduate Studies at Auburn University. Dr. Steinfatt and Dr. Bert Pryor have published two highly respected research articles on inoculation theory, and Dr. Steinfatt provided the researcher with his unpublished "Resistance to Persuasion" (1970) as well as a copy of the messages used by McGuire in his work in inoculation. The letters were constructed using McGuire's messages as guides.

Other factors also entered into construction of the letters. Research indicated that language of a moderately intense (emotional) nature better facilitates attitude change (Burgoon, Miller, et al., 1978), and that low intensity language should be avoided. However, language of extremely high intensity can produce undesirable results, such as the boomerang effect (Burgoon, Miller, et al., 1978). Present tense verbs as opposed to future tense verbs have also been demonstrated to be more successful in mediating attitude change (McEwen, 1969).

The only difference between the letter of inoculation (T1) and the letter of forewarning (T2) was the lack of the two-sided appeal in the letter of forewarning. Otherwise, the letters were identical. This was to ensure that the only difference being measured was the effect of inoculation. Such strategy is supported by previous research

(McGuire, 1961). Richards (1969) constructed his experimental letters in precisely this manner when experimenting with implicit and explicit conclusions in a two-sided appeal study. However, since inoculation involves a lengthier addition, the relative letter lengths in this study were more pronounced than in Richard's study. Given the choice between obviously different letter lengths for T1 and T2, this researcher chose to double-space the letter of forewarning, thus giving the appearance of similarly lengthed letters without changing the content of either letter. This appeared to be empirically superior since additional, unnecessary information added to the letter of forewarning would have been superfluous and could have seriously confounded the variables being examined.

The letters were constructed in line with the general type of letter a non-alumnus would expect to receive from Tusculum College. Historically, one page letters signed by the chief development officer on official college stationery with personal salutations both on the envelope and in the inside address have been the norm. This policy was continued. There are, incidentally, research results indicating that personalization in direct mail solicitation tends to attract and maintain high figure donors and donors of higher social standing (D.M.M.A., 1979).

The prepaid return envelope is also a standard part of the Tusculum direct-mail fundraising package. The outside address on the envelope containing T1 and T2 did not indicate the specific office origin, as research indicated that this has a tendency to discourage reading on the part of some recipients (Sheppard, 1975). Too, as

research suggests (Sheppard, 1975), Tusculum has for some time utilized envelope and stationery colors other than black ink on white paper stock to increase the efficacy of its appeal.

Finally, research findings have indicated that the use of "you" or "your" in the letter of solicitation is superior to "we," and the "you's" should always outnumber the "we's" in any piece of copy (Keller, 1977). In the inoculation letter (T1), for example, there are seven "you's" or "your's" compared to two "we's." The Public Management Institute (1980) also recommended that dots and dashes be used to break up long sentences, but did not provide research data to support this claim.

The letter of inoculation (T1) is included in the Appendices section of this paper as Appendix A, the letter of forewarning (T2) as Appendix B, and the general letter of solicitation which was mailed to all subjects (T3), as Appendix C. Additionally, the brochure which accompanied T3 is provided as Appendix D, the prepaid return envelope as Appendix E, and an example of the outside envelope used in all three mailings as Appendix F.

Appendix G is a breakdown of the individual components of the letter of inoculation. The first two paragraphs are identical to the letter of forewarning (Appendix B), but the final two paragraphs constitute what is termed "inoculation." The first sentence of the third paragraph is the weakened version of the expected counterarguments. The remainder of the letter following that sentence consists of stronger supportive arguments. The combination of the two (i.e., weakened counterarguments and stronger supportive arguments) form the inoculation.

It is true that forewarning and inoculation are inseparable in the letter of inoculation, but it must be remembered that inoculation is but one form of forewarning. Nevertheless, it would be empirically valuable to test for the effects of both the forewarning and the inoculation components of the letter of inoculation. This desired research is discussed as an implication for future research in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive Data

It should be noted that figures indicating the total response rate (i.e., donation) for specific populations for the previous fiscal year (1980-81) are not comparable to the response rate in this experiment. The 1980-81 response rates encompass giving decisions from July 1, 1980 through June 30, 1981. The response rates in this study encompass giving decisions from November 16 through the end of the calendar year, December 31, 1981. A good portion of Tusculum's donors do not and probably will not give until April, May, or June. However, this study could and did measure the effectiveness of the treatments under consideration during the time period of November 16 through December 31. The major requirements necessary for empirical evaluation are unbiased, randomized groups of subjects with exposure to experimental treatments, a true control group, and accurate, unobtrusive forms of measurement. This study satisfied those needs. Additionally, this researcher verified through randomization that near equal giving percentages existed across each of the three subgroups within each population. Thus, the results obtained from November 16 through December 31 are valid indicators of the effectiveness of T1, T2, and (T) for all population members.

The experiment was initiated on November 16, 1981 at Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tennessee. Letters of inoculation were mailed

to a total of 412 subjects and letters of forewarning to 393 subjects. A total of 406 subjects received no treatment and served as the control group. Letters returned as undeliverable (moved, deceased, etc.) accounted for the unequal group sizes. These unequal proportions were taken into account in the statistical analysis and were responsible for the unequal cell sizes in the Expected Frequencies tables for Chi-Square. One week later all subjects received the college's fall solicitation letter and brochure.

All experimental letters (T1 and T2) were delivered to the U.S. Post Office on Monday, November 16, 1981 at 10:00 a.m. From that point researcher control gave way to the normal routine of the U.S. Postal Service. One week later, November 23, 1981, the actual letter of solicitation (M1) was mailed to all 1211 subjects. Measurements were taken as subjects responded (or did not respond) to T1, T2, and (T) via M1.

Responses were arbitrarily limited to those gifts arriving at the college by January 5, 1982, thus assuring the researcher that all gifts mailed by the conclusion of the calendar and tax year would arrive at the college in time for inclusion in the results. Responses were tabulated and analyzed for information either supportive or non-supportive of the hypotheses.

For comparative purposes, Sturrock (1981) suggested that 3 percent is the expected response rate for previous non-donors and 8 to 10 percent the "average" overall response rate. Tusculum received a total of 117 responses to its 1211 mailings, or a 10 percent response rate, well within the average range. Aggregate findings are presented

in Table 1. As was expected, parents responded at the lowest percentage rate (.02), while business executives demonstrated the highest percentage of giving (.13). Non-alumni friends gave at a rate of 11 percent. Overall, inoculation elicited an 11 percent response, forewarning an 11.5 percent response, and no treatment (control) a 6.5 percent response rate.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE OF SUBJECTS DONATING PER INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS

Group	Total Population			Row Totals
	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	
Parents	88	84	86	258
Business Executives	62	56	56	174
Friends	<u>262</u>	<u>253</u>	<u>264</u>	<u>779</u>
Column Totals	412	393	406	1211

Group	Number Responding			Row Totals
	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	
Parents	3 (.034)	3 (.036)	0 (0)	6 (.02)
Business Executives	10 (.16)	9 (.16)	4 (.07)	23 (.13)
Friends	<u>32 (.12)</u>	<u>33 (.13)</u>	<u>23 (.09)</u>	<u>88 (.11)</u>
Column Totals	45 (.11)	45 (.115)	27 (.065)	117 (.10)

Note. Numbers in parentheses express the percentage of the specific treatment population (as reported in the upper table) responding to the various treatments, as represented by the adjacent raw number. Column totals represent identical comparisons but for the entire experimental population.

Predictive Data

Table 2 contains the aggregate data (observed frequencies) for the experiment with the corresponding expected frequencies, followed by the Chi-square analysis. Expected frequencies were attained for each cell via proportionate assignment of the total population responses. The variance in the three populations (size) was taken into account in assigning expected cell frequencies in this and in all tables which follow. Chi-square analysis of the aggregate data resulted in a value of 6.8, which is significant at the .05 confidence level. Table 2, despite a significant finding, leads to rejection of Hypothesis 1. That is, 'inoculation and forewarning were both significantly more effective at inducing donations than was no treatment (control). However, inoculation was not more effective than forewarning. In numbers donating there was, statistically speaking, little difference between the two. Hypothesis 2, it would follow, is supported by the data.

Table 3 contains the same data as Table 2, but the Chi-square test of independence was applied. This form of Chi-square is useful in determining if there is a relationship between the group or population to which the subjects belong and the particular treatment which is most effective, or if the populations are independent. In other words, are parents more influenced by inoculation than, say, business executives? The resultant Chi-square value falls just short of the 9.5 value necessary for significance at the .05 level. Thus, it must be assumed that there is independence among the three populations and, as such, group membership played no role in a subject's response.

TABLE 2

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF DONORS PER INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS

	Group	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	Row Totals
A Obtained frequencies	All	45(.11)	45(.115)	27(.065)	117(.095)
B Expected frequencies	All	39.32(.095)	37.34(.095)	40.34(.095)	117(.095)
C $\frac{(A-B)^2}{B}$	All	.82	1.57	4.41	6.8
$\chi^2 = 6.8$ $C\phi = .26$ d.f. = 2 $\underline{P} < .05$					

Note. Numbers in parentheses express the percentage of the specific treatment population (i.e., as reported in Table 1) responding (or expected to respond) to the various treatments, as represented by the adjacent row number.

TABLE 3

CHI-SQUARE TEST OF INDEPENDENCE AMONG ALL POPULATIONS

	Group	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	Row Totals
A Obtained frequencies	Parents	3(.034)	3(.036)	0(0)	6(.023)
	Friends	32(.12)	33(.13)	23(.09)	88(.11)
	Business	<u>10(.16)</u>	<u>9(.16)</u>	<u>4(.07)</u>	<u>23(.13)</u>
	Column totals	45(.11)	45(.115)	27(.065)	117(.095)
B Expected frequencies	Parents	2.04(.023)	1.98(.023)	1.98(.023)	6(.023)
	Friends	29(.11)	28(.11)	31(.11)	88(.11)
	Business	<u>8.28(.13)</u>	<u>7.36(.13)</u>	<u>7.36(.13)</u>	<u>23(.13)</u>
	Column totals	39.32(.095)	37.34(.095)	40.34(.095)	117(.095)
C $\frac{(A-B)^2}{B}$	Parents	.45	.53	1.98	2.96
	Friends	.31	.90	2.07	3.28
	Business	<u>.36</u>	<u>.37</u>	<u>1.54</u>	<u>2.27</u>
	Column totals	1.12	1.80	5.59	8.51
$\chi^2 = 8.51$ $C\phi = .26$ d.f. = 4 $\underline{P} =$ Not significant at .05 level					

Note. Numbers in parentheses express the percentage of the specific treatment population (i.e., as reported in Table 1) responding (or expected to respond) to the various treatments, as represented by the adjacent row number.

Though the data in Table 4 would seem, at face value, to indicate that business executives responded most favorably to inoculation and forewarning, with a less favorable response to no prior treatment, Chi-square analysis did not lend such support. The value of 2.27 was below the 5.99 value necessary for significance at the .05 level.

TABLE 4
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES DONATING
PER INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS

	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	Row Totals
A Obtained frequencies	10(.16)	9(.16)	4(.07)	23(.13)
B Expected frequencies	8.28(.13)	7.36(.13)	7.36(.13)	23(.13)
C $\frac{(A-B)^2}{B}$	.36	.37	1.54	2.27
$\chi^2 = 2.27$ $C\phi = .30$ d.f. = 2 $\underline{P} =$ Not significant at .05 level.				

Note. Numbers in parenthesis express the percentage of the specific treatment population (i.e., as reported in Table 1) responding (or expected to respond) to the various treatments, as represented by the adjacent row number.

Table 5 would also seem to indicate a similar significant finding for parents, but as with the data in Table 4, once more this was not the case. The primary problem in both populations was the low response rate--a rate resulting in low frequency cells and consequently

low Chi-square values. When grouped together in aggregate form, however, the data become meaningful as illustrated in Table 2. As an interesting note, the data in both Table 4 and Table 5 resulted in contingency coefficient values normally associated with significant findings.

TABLE 5
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF PARENTS DONATING
PER INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS

	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	Row Totals
A Obtained frequencies	3 (.034)	3 (.036)	0 (0)	6 (.023)
B Expected frequencies	2.04 (.023)	1.98 (.023)	1.98 (.023)	6 (.023)
C $\frac{(A-B)^2}{B}$	.45	.53	1.98	2.96
$\chi^2 = 2.96$ $C\phi = .57^*$ d.f. = 2 $\underline{P} =$ Not significant at .05 level.				

*The contingency coefficient of .57 indicated a relationship, but cell numbers were too small to yield a significant Chi-square.

Note. Numbers in parentheses express the percentage of the specific treatment population (i.e., as reported in Table 1) responding (or expected to respond) to the various treatments, as represented by the adjacent raw number.

The third population, non-alumni friends, followed a similar pattern. Once more the recipients of both the letters of inoculation

and forewarning responded at the highest percentage levels, followed in third place by the control group. The data resulted in a Chi-square value of 3.28, greater than the previous values found in parents and business executives, but still below the critical value necessary for significance at the .05 level. Again, the aggregate data were able to successfully quantify the trends evident in all three populations (Table 6).

TABLE 6
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF NON-ALUMNI FRIENDS DONATING
PER INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS

	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	Row Totals
A Obtained frequencies	32(.12)	33(.13)	23(.09)	88(.11)
B Expected frequencies	29(.11)	28(.11)	31(.11)	88(.11)
C $\frac{(A-B)^2}{B}$	.31	.90	2.07	3.28
$\chi^2 = 3.28$ $C\phi = .19$ d.f. = 2 $\underline{P} =$ Not significant at .05 level.				

Note. Numbers in parentheses express the percentage of the specific treatment population (i.e., as reported in Table 1) responding (or expected to respond) to the various treatments, as represented by the adjacent row number.

One of the more interesting questions in this study was the relationship between the various treatments and the sex of the donor.

Hypotheses 7 and 8 posited no difference in the expected response rate of men and women to either inoculation or forewarning, while maintaining both treatments would be more effective than no experimental treatment (control). The results for women, though a trend was indeed evident, were not significant. The Chi-square value of 2.17 was not significant to indicate a statistically significant difference among the treatments (Table 7).

TABLE 7
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF FEMALES DONATING
PER INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS*

	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	Row Totals
A Obtained frequencies	8(.17)	7(1.55)	5(.078)	20(.128)
B Expected frequencies	6(.128)	5.8(.128)	8.2(.128)	20(.128)
C $\frac{(A-B)^2}{B}$	.67	.25	1.25	2.17
$\chi^2 = 2.17$ $C\phi = .313$ d.f. = 2 $\underline{P} =$ Not significant at .05 level.				

*No females responded in either the Parents or Business groups, and both groups possessed a negligible number of female addressees. Figures represent the response rate from the Friends category.

Note. Total female population was 156 (Inoculation: 47; Forewarning: 45; Control: 64). Numbers in parentheses express percentage of specific treatment population reflected by adjacent row number.

The data compiled from the males of the experimental populations led to a different conclusion. A highly significant Chi-square of 8.63 indicated that inoculation and forewarning were both more effective than no prior treatment in soliciting donations from males. Forewarning was slightly more effective than inoculation, but the data do not support a statistically significant difference between the two (Table 8).

TABLE 8
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF MALES DONATING
PER INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS

	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	Row Totals
A Obtained frequencies	28(.146)	29(.168)	14(.069)	71(.125)
B Expected frequencies	24.14(.125)	21.3(.125)	25.56(.125)	71(.125)
C $\frac{(A-B)^2}{B}$	.62	2.78	5.23	8.63
$\chi^2 = 8.63$ $C\phi = .33$ D.F. = 2 $\underline{P} < .025$				

Note. Total male population was 565 (Inoculation: 192; Forewarning: 172; Control: 201). Numbers in parentheses express percentage of specific treatment population reflected by adjacent row number.

Hypotheses 3 and 5 posited no significant effect on the size of donation by recipients (prior donors) of the letters of inoculation and forewarning. The data in Table 9, however, indicate a highly

TABLE 9

EFFECT OF TREATMENTS ON SIZE OF DONATION OF PREVIOUS DONORS
(WILCOXON SIGNED-RANKED TEST)

Treatment	Inoculation			Forewarning			Control					
	1980-81	1981-82	Change	Rank	1980-81	1981-82	Change	Rank	1980-81	1981-82	Change	Rank
Parents	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Business	800.00	1000	+200	+11.5	125	100	- 25	-1	1000	2000	+1000	+8
	896.18	1175	+278.82	+14.0	936	1450	+514	+3				
	1000.00	1225	+225	+13.0								
	100.00	300	+200	+11.5								
Friends	20.00	100	+ 80	+ 4.0	100	200	+100	+2	500	1000	+ 500	+5
	200.00	100	-100	- 6.5					100	120	+ 20	+2
	100.00	750	+650	+15.0					5	10	+ 5	+1
	200.00	300	+100	+ 6.5					100	10	- 90	-3
	100.00	200	+100	+ 6.5					628	40	- 588	-6
	100.00	200	+100	+ 6.5					200	100	- 100	-4
	250.00	1000	+750	+16.0					1000	250	- 750	-7
	100.00	250	+150	+10.0								
	5.00	10	+ 5	+ 1.5								
	40.00	10	- 30	- 3.0								
	100.00	225	+125	+ 9.0								
	20.00	25	+ 5	+ 1.5								
	Wilcoxon Rank Sum				Wilcoxon Rank Sum				Wilcoxon Rank Sum			
	n = 16				n = 3*				n = 8			
	Ta (+) = 126.5				Ta (+) = 5				Ta (+) = 16			
	Tb (-) = 9.5*				Tb (-) = 1				Tb (-) = 20			
	*P < .01				*Insufficient n for computation.				No significant difference.			

significant difference for recipients of the letter of inoculation, thus leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 5 was supported by the data (that being, that forewarning will have no significant effect on the size of the donation of previous donors). The control group also demonstrated no significant effects. Thus, despite the relatively equal effects on the decision to give by recipients of inoculation and recipients of forewarning, the recipients of inoculation tended, and quite significantly so, to substantially increase the size of their gifts. This in itself could be of great consequence to the development officer interested not only in percentage of donors but in increasing the size of their gifts.

If inoculation and forewarning are more effective at eliciting gifts than no prior treatment and if inoculation can influence previous donors to increase their gifts, might the same results be possible with new donors? Obviously one cannot measure for an increase in gift size among new donors, but certainly it might be hypothesized that the same effect on the decision to give would be evident. Hypothesis 4 predicted that inoculation would be most effective with new donors while Hypothesis 6 posited that forewarning, though less effective than inoculation, would be more influential in gift solicitation than no prior treatment. As the data in Table 10 show, Hypothesis 4 held true, but once again there was no statistical difference between inoculation and forewarning. Thus Hypothesis 6 was only half true in its prediction (i.e., it did significantly increase the decision to donate among previous non-donors, but it was not less effective than inoculation).

TABLE 10

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF NEW DONORS DONATING
PER INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS

	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	Row Totals
A Obtained frequencies	15(.044)	14(.042)	4(.012)	33(.032)
B Expected frequencies	11.22(.032)	10.56(.032)	11.22(.032)	33(.032)
C $\frac{(A-B)^2}{B}$	1.27	1.12	4.65	7.04
$\chi^2 = 7.04$ $C\phi = .419$ D.F. = 2 $\underline{P} < .05$				

Note. Total population of new donors (previous non-donors) was 1003 (Inoculation: 342; Forewarning: 334; Control: 327). Numbers in parentheses express percentage of specific treatment population reflected by adjacent row number.

Though the effect of the various treatments on size of donation by previous donors was investigated, an exploration of the effect of the various treatments on the basic decision to give by previous donors has yet to be conducted. Table 11 yields the data resulting from this investigation. As in several previous tables, a trend toward a higher effectiveness for inoculation and forewarning is apparent, but the resulting Chi-square value of 1.46 is not significant. Thus, one cannot assert with confidence any difference among treatments for previous donors in this study.

TABLE 11

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUS DONORS DONATING
PER INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS

(1980-81 Donors Who Responded to Experimental Mailings)

	Group	Inoculation	Forewarning	Control	Row Total
A Obtained frequencies	All groups	23(.45)	29(.43)	23(.33)	84(.41)
B Expected frequencies	All groups	28.92(.41)	26.88(.41)	28.20(.41)	84(.41)
C $\frac{(A-B)^2}{B}$		.33	.17	.96	1.46
$\chi^2 = 1.46$ $C\phi = .017$ d.f. = 2 $\underline{P} =$ Not significant at .05 level.					

Note. Total population of previous donors was 208 (Inoculation: 71; Forewarning: 67; Control: 70). Numbers in parentheses express percentages of specific treatment population reflected by adjacent raw numbers.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

It was the intent of this study to investigate empirically the effects of inoculation and forewarning on an individual's decision to give. Such research is far too rare in the development field, and it was hoped that this project would serve as a catalyst for future investigation. Though the results were, at times, surprising and in conflict with the researcher's original hypotheses, the findings were in no way less informational or useful. In fact, several of the findings were extremely intriguing and beckon the interested researcher to conduct additional research.

The Research Questions

The research questions posed in Chapter 1, from which the hypotheses were developed, should now be restated with conclusions drawn from the research data. The conclusions, however, are not deemed to be generalizable beyond this study.

1. Will exposure to a prior message one week before the actual letter of solicitation (inoculation) containing strong supportive arguments for donating to an organization and weakened counterarguments have any effect on the actual percentage of donations to that organization?

The answer is yes. Inoculation does increase the chances that an individual will donate to the institution. This conclusion was supported by data from Table 2, page 53; Table 8, page 59; and

Table 10, page 62. There is, then, empirical evidence to support the use of inoculation in influencing individuals to donate.

2. Will the effects (behavioral response) differ when the letter of solicitation is preceded instead by a letter of forewarning as opposed to inoculation?

In conflict with the hypothesis, forewarning was not, in a statistically significant sense, less effective than inoculation. In fact, the data from Table 2, page 53; Table 10, page 62; and Table 11, page 63, indicate that forewarning is essentially just as effective as inoculation in eliciting donations to the college. Thus, for the institution interested only in numbers or percentages of donors, either technique could hypothetically be utilized with equal confidence.

3. What are the effects of inoculation, forewarning, and no treatment on giving decisions of previous donors?

Table 11 indicates clearly that previous donors did not respond in a significantly different manner to any of the three treatments (i.e., inoculation, forewarning, or the control group). As such, it might be assumed that previous donors are immune to argumentation, having already made the decision to donate before the treatments were received. If this is the case, then the institution could save money by not sending advance mailings to previous donors and instead simply undertake a single mail solicitation. However, before drawing this conclusion one should note closely the conclusions drawn in question 5 which follows.

4. What are the effects of inoculation, forewarning, and no treatment on giving decisions of previous non-donors (new donors)?

Interestingly, new donors responded at significantly higher rates to the letters of inoculation and forewarning than to no prior communication (see Table 10). It may be that individuals who have never given to the college are more susceptible to both advance notice (forewarning) and to arguments in favor of giving (inoculation). Certainly one can argue that previous donors have undoubtedly experienced such arguments before, while new donors have probably not and therefore are more easily influenced. Whatever the reason, new donors did respond more favorably to an advance communication than to no advance communication.

5. How do inoculation, forewarning, and no treatment affect donation size of previous donors (increase, decrease, no change)?

Table 9, page 60, indicates that inoculation was highly influential in increasing the size of a previous donor's gift. Though, as seen in question 3, there is little difference in the overall response rate on the part of subjects to inoculation and forewarning, inoculation is the only treatment producing such a significant increase in the size of gifts. This finding leads to rejection of Hypothesis 3 (that inoculation will have no significant effect), but to acceptance of Hypothesis 5 (that forewarning will have no significant effect). The potential application of this finding is, as should be obvious, quite momentous.

6. Are the effects of inoculation, forewarning, and no treatment different when applied to men and women (regarding decision to give)?

Utilizing the findings from Table 7, page 58, and Table 8, page 59, the answer to this question is yes. Women tended to give at a statistically equal percentage whether they were recipients of the letter of inoculation, the letter of forewarning, or simply members of the control group. It should be noted, however, that there is a trend in Table 7, page 58, which could be interpreted to mean, were cell frequencies higher, that inoculation and forewarning are more effective.

Table 8, page 59, on the other hand, presents a highly significant Chi-square (.025 level of significance) asserting that men respond more favorably to inoculation and forewarning than to no advance communication. Since women appear to respond equally no matter what the treatment and since men respond best to inoculation and forewarning, it would appear logical to use either inoculation or forewarning when soliciting funds for an institution. However, remembering the significant finding in question 5, it may be simplest and more profitable to select inoculation as the chief vehicle for direct mail solicitation.

Findings

Major findings of the study are:

1. Exposure to a prior communication (either forewarning or inoculation) one week before a direct mail campaign significantly increases the rate of response of those subjects receiving the communication.

2. Inoculation, forewarning, and no prior message were equally effective in soliciting gifts from previous donors.
3. Inoculation and forewarning produced equally significant increases in the rate of giving among previous non-donors (new donors).
4. Inoculation significantly increased the size of gifts by previous donors, while forewarning and no advance communication produced no significant increases or decreases.
5. Women tended to give at statistically equal percentages despite the particular treatments received.
6. Men responded at a significantly higher rate to inoculation and forewarning than to no advance communication.

Conclusions

Additionally, though significant findings were not the case for several areas of interest in this study, certain trends were evident (e.g., the effect of inoculation on women and parents). As such, even though these findings were "significant" at only the .10 or even .25 confidence levels, such significance can be meaningful in the real world of day-to-day fundraising. That is, if a development officer can be .90 or even .75 confident of a technique's usefulness, then he or she is on much firmer ground than might otherwise be the case. In fact, in actual fundraising situations, a confidence level of .49 could be an improvement over the usual state of affairs.

One very useful conclusion that can be drawn from the findings is that, in most cases, some prior contact--perhaps any contact--does indeed increase the chances that a subject will donate. Granted,

this warning of the message to follow may have provided some individuals with an opportunity to build a defense against giving. Undoubtedly such a phenomenon occurred in this study. Yet, in the final analysis, if more individuals were persuaded to donate than to not donate, the treatment or technique was considered successful. Both inoculation and forewarning claimed success in this endeavor.

In regard to the above conclusion, one should keep in mind that forewarning or inoculation, even though resulting in increased giving percentages, may not always be advisable. For example, in low fee membership drives or in fundraising campaigns which have historically resulted in average gifts in the low dollar range, the limited dollars added through utilization of an advance communication may not exceed the actual costs incurred in implementing such an advance communication. When gifts tend to be larger, as was the case at Tusculum College, then the effort is obviously worthwhile (indeed, the additional revenue generated from inoculation covered sixfold the cost of the entire mailing).

A conclusion that was drawn from Finding 2 is that previous donors remain essentially unchanged by prior communication and, as a consequence, the soliciting institution could save time, money, and energy by not contacting such subjects before the actual campaign. Most institutions, however, cannot easily separate their mailing lists into previous donors and non-donors. As such, it may be simplest to "inoculate" or "forewarn" the entire population. Of course, since Finding 3 indicated that previous non-donors responded best to some sort of advance communication, and Finding 4 gave credence to inoculation

as a valuable tool to increase the size of a previous donor's gift, the logical decision would be to send all subjects a letter of inoculation as opposed to simple forewarning. In this way an institution could best guarantee the highest possible percentage response as well as the largest possible overall increase in gift size.

Drawing a conclusion concerning the different reactions of males and females to the various treatments was a more complex undertaking. Why, for example, would men respond at a significantly higher rate to an advance communication than women? Certainly the number of females responding was less than desirable, and, indeed, a larger number may have changed the resultant cell sizes and thus the Chi-square value. Still, there is a statistical difference between males and females. One possible answer to this question may lie in the TYPES of individuals on the mailing lists. For example, the men on Tusculum College's mailing lists tended to be business leaders and household heads and, as such, may have required more substantiation before parting with their dollars. The majority of the women, however, tended to be housewives, were perhaps not as concerned with financial considerations, and enjoyed a longstanding relationship with Tusculum. One might surmise, then, that their decisions to give were formulated on past practice and were not unduly influenced by any of the treatments. Perhaps, too, the men, who tended to be full-time employees, more often forgot the first solicitation and needed the second one to once more bring the question to their minds. This is, importantly, NOT a comment on psychological differences between men and women and should not be construed as such. Instead, it is a conclusion based on the

characteristics of those individuals and only those individuals on this particular institution's mailing lists. As such, any decision regarding male and female response differences must be limited only to the experimental populations at Tusculum College.

An important conclusion drawn from all the findings is that such research should be replicated in other institutions utilizing larger (and different) populations. Certainly most institutions possess similar constituencies, but only by additional research can the findings of this study be truly verified and generalized to a larger population. Admittedly, such research is difficult to accomplish, for most development offices closely guard the confidentiality of their records, and with good reason. Too, a truly scientific approach to persuasion research is not widespread among development officers. This understandable guardedness as well as an inclination not to engage in social research are guarantees, though undesirable ones, that fundraising research will remain a relatively challenging area for communication scholars. If such studies do not occur until, as was the case here, the development director just happens to be working on a doctorate in communication, then the outlook for any measurable volume of research is bleak.

Implications for Future Research

A replication of the study should be conducted utilizing a much larger population. In this way, those areas which are now "trends" in this study could be successfully and significantly explored. Large universities or national non-profit organizations would appear to be

ideal locales for such research with their often times enormous mailing lists as well as the necessary equipment and staff to facilitate such research at a minimal cost. Even trends, when occurring over large populations, can result in large dollar increases. Such research could prove to be of immense value to the fundraising field.

Communication scholars should heed the call for more research in this area and take the first step by explaining to development officers the value of experimental research. Many fundraising professionals, though talented, must be educated regarding the research avenues available to them.

Additional research might aim at investigating the influence of time as it relates to experimental treatments. For example, do effects differ when the letter of inoculation precedes the actual letter of solicitation by two weeks (or two months) as opposed to the one week in this study?

Additional efforts might also be expended in an attempt to distinguish the different effect(s), if any differences do indeed exist, of inoculation and forewarning. That is, if the introductory "forewarning" were omitted from the letter of inoculation, would the results have varied? In this particular study such an omission would have confounded the variables at play (i.e., this researcher was interested in the difference, if any, brought about by the ADDITION of inoculation to a letter of forewarning--thus a controlled situation of identical treatments save for inoculation). Future research in this area, and especially research utilizing larger populations that could better ensure adequate cell sizes (to accommodate additional experimental variables), would be highly desirable.

Finally, future research might seek to apply the findings of this study to other forms of fundraising. Would, for instance, the results differ if both the treatments and measures were conducted via the telephone (e.g., national and local "phonathons"), or through personal solicitation? The use of the telephone in fundraising is rapidly increasing, and any research which would prove or disprove its utility would be valuable.

The potential avenues for future research in fundraising are virtually limitless. Source, message, channel, and audience variables provide four major and, in some cases, relatively unexplored areas for the enterprising researcher. The only limits on future research are those limits imposed by the unimaginative practitioners who will not take advantage of the unique opportunity in their field. Fortunately, the profession is populated by a great number of inquisitive and capable individuals who most certainly will rise to the occasion.

Hopefully, development professionals and communication researchers can devote a larger percentage of their resources and their attention to solving some of the very practical problems facing the fundraising practitioner. As noted in the Introduction of this study, the successful pursuit of empirical knowledge in fundraising cannot help but strengthen both the development and communication fields.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE LETTER OF INOCULATION

tusculum college

GREENEVILLE, TENNESSEE 37743

November, 1981

John Doe
USA

Dear Mr. Doe,

In approximately one week you will receive a letter from our office requesting a gift to aid in our 1981/82 Tusculum Today Fund campaign goal of \$425,000. This goal would be a pittance for most institutions, but for Tusculum College it is a formidable objective. Yet with the combined support of our loyal alumni, staff, and friends we know that we can achieve this goal.

Your gift, whether large or small, can mean the difference between a successful campaign and the continued success of Tusculum, and a mediocre campaign and a corresponding digression to mediocrity. We are confident that you will once more demonstrate your support of Tusculum....Tennessee's first college.

People use a great many reasons for not giving (e.g., a sagging economy, high interest rates, less purchasing power). Yet these reasons for not giving are more accurately reasons for giving. Colleges, too, must contend with the economy, high interest rates, and dollars that do not go as far as last year. Consider, too, the consequences of not giving; the very real risk of losing the opportunity to benefit from a value-oriented, private higher education, as well as the loss of an industry--yes, an industry!--which channeled nearly \$3,000,000 into the local economy despite a local giving total of \$107,000 (a 32 to 1 return). In fact, the economy will sag more, interest rates will climb higher, and your dollars will buy even less if institutions like Tusculum disappear.

And finally, it just feels good to help an institution that has, since 1794, dedicated itself to helping others. So, when you receive our request next week, please give whether the gift is \$10,000, \$1,000, or \$1.00. Your gift does matter.

Be looking for our letter.

Sincerely,

N. Brent Kennedy III
Assistant to the President
for Development

APPENDIX B

THE LETTER OF FOREWARNING

tusculum college

GREENEVILLE, TENNESSEE 37743

November, 1981

Jane Doe
USA

Dear Mrs. Doe,

In approximately one week you will receive a letter from our office requesting a gift to our 1981/82 Tusculum Today Fund campaign goal of \$425,000. This goal would be a pittance for most institutions, but for Tusculum College it is a formidable objective. Yet with the combined support of our loyal alumni, staff, and friends we know that we can achieve this goal.

Your gift, whether large or small, can mean the difference between a successful campaign and the continued successs of Tusculum, and a mediocre campaign and a corresponding digression to mediocrity. We are confident that you will once more demonstrate your support of Tusculum....Tennessee's first college.

Be looking for our letter.

Sincerely,

N. Brent Kennedy III
Assistant to the President
for Development

APPENDIX C

GENERAL LETTER OF SOLICITATION

tusculum college

GREENEVILLE, TENNESSEE 37743

December, 1981

Jim Donor
USA

Dear Mr. Donor,

As the joyous Holiday Season approaches and as you plan your giving for this special occasion, please do not forget Tusculum College and its many direct contributions to you.

Our 1981/82 Tusculum Today Fund campaign goal of \$425,000 would be an insignificant sum for many institutions, but for Tusculum it is a formidable objective. Furthermore, the educational and financial returns to so many of us, regardless of whether we attended Tusculum College, are substantial. Please take a brief moment to examine the enclosed brochure-- then make your tax deductible gift via the convenient pre-paid envelope. Your contribution will be put to excellent, constructive use by Tusculum College and could mean the difference between continued excellence and digression to mediocrity. Your gift, large or small, can make the difference.

Thank you for your consideration and may your Christmas be beautiful and rewarding!

Sincerely,

N. Brent Kennedy III
Assistant to the President
for Development

APPENDIX D

ACCOMPANYING BROCHURE

Photographs: 1) Janice Craig receives 1981 **PRESIDENT'S AWARD**; 2) Marguerite Dette, surrounded by the Class of 1931, received the 1981 **PIONEER AWARD** (That is Mr. Dette in the upper left corner); 3) **OLD COLLEGE** (1841); 4) President Mezoff; 5) Mary Gray, dedicated alumna and wife of the late Tusculum professor, Charles O. Gray, Jr.; 6) Professor Johanna Kondratieff advises two students.



**CARNEGIE LIBRARY
(1910)**

tusculum college

Tennessee's Oldest College

Gifts to Tusculum College are tax-deductible as provided by law. Year-end giving can often provide additional tax savings, as can gifts of appreciated securities, real property, or life insurance.

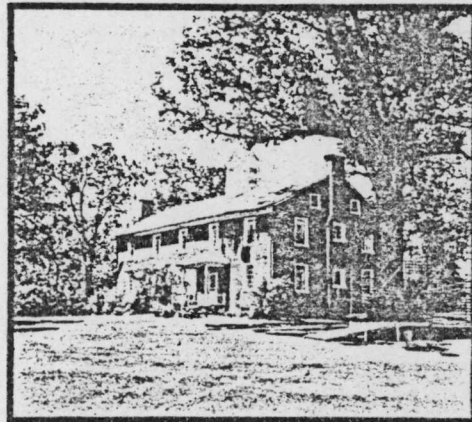
For additional information, please call collect to 615/639-2821, or write:

Development Office
Box 40
Tusculum College
Greeneville, Tennessee 37743



**187
Years
Young!**

tusculum college



Tusculum is people



.... helping people !

ANNOUNCING:

**The 1981-82
Tusculum Today
Fund**

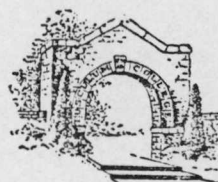
**Your Gift
DOES
Make a Difference!**

SEND YOUR GIFT

BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1981

TO QUALIFY FOR A 1981

TAX DEDUCTION!

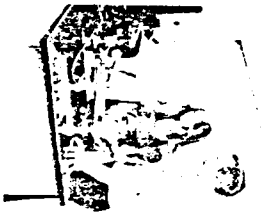


Tusculum Since 1794

APPENDIX E

PREPAID ENVELOPE

and so much more. In addition to all other sources of income, the college must look to The Tusculum Today Fund each year (July 1 - June 30) to help meet current operating expenses.



Your gifts to The Tusculum Today Fund help support:
STUDENT AID EQUIPMENT FACULTY

CAMPUS

NO POSTAGE
 NECESSARY
 IF MAILED
 IN THE
 UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
 FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 4 GREENEVILLE, TENN

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

the tusculum today fund
 TUSCULUM COLLEGE / Box 410
 GREENEVILLE, TENNESSEE 37743

Institutional Advancement

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMPLOYER/PROFESSION/BUSINESS _____ POSITION _____

SPOUSE'S EMPLOYER/PROF./BUS. _____ POSITION _____

Does your company match your gift? _____

ENROLL ME IN

_____ ALUMNA	_____ The President's Club (Gifts of \$1,000 or more)
_____ ALUMNUS	_____ The Pioneer Club (Gifts of \$500 or more)
_____ CLASS YEAR	_____ The Heritage Club (Gifts of \$250 or more)
_____ PARENTS OF CURRENT OR FORMER TUSCULUM STUDENT	_____ The Century Club (Gifts of \$100 or more)
_____ FRIEND	

If you would like information on Estate Planning, please check here _____

I am enclosing \$ _____

I am pledging \$ _____ to be paid, by June 30th, as follows: _____

We welcome news of our alumni and friends: new job, family news, church or civic work, other activities -- also any comment you would like to make.

Remarks: _____



Gifts to the Tusculum Today Fund are tax deductible as provided by law.

Please make all checks and ownership transfer forms payable to Tusculum College.

APPENDIX F

OUTSIDE ENVELOPE

tusculum college
GREENEVILLE, TENNESSEE 37743

APPENDIX G

THE LETTER OF INOCULATION--INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

tusculum college

GREENEVILLE, TENNESSEE 37743

November, 1981

John Doe
USA

Dear Mr. Doe,

A { In approximately one week you will receive a letter from our office requesting a gift to aid in our 1981/82 Tusculum Today Fund campaign goal of \$425,000. This goal would be a pittance for most institutions, but for Tusculum College it is a formidable objective. Yet with the combined support of our loyal alumni, staff, and friends we know that we can achieve this goal.

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B { People use a great many reasons for not giving (e.g., a sagging economy, high interest rates, less purchasing power). Yet these reasons for not giving are more accurately reasons for giving. Colleges, too, must contend with the economy, high interest rates, and dollars that do not go as far as last year. Consider, too, the consequences of not giving; the very real risk of losing the opportunity to benefit from a value-oriented, private higher education, as well as the loss of an industry--yes, an industry!--which channeled nearly \$3,000,000 into the local economy despite a local giving total of \$107,000 (a 32 to 1 return). In fact, the economy will sag more, interest rates will climb higher, and your dollars will buy even less if institutions like Tusculum disappear.

C {

And finally, it just feels good to help an institution that has, since 1794, dedicated itself to helping others. So, when you receive our request next week, please give whether the gift is \$10,000, \$1,000, or \$1.00. Your gift does matter.

Be looking for our letter.

Sincerely,

N. Brent Kennedy III
Assistant to the President
for Development

A= Forewarning, B= Weakened counter-arguments*

C= Stronger supportive arguments*

* B and C combine to form "inoculation"

VITA

N. Brent Kennedy, III was born in Norton, Virginia on November 15, 1950. He graduated from J. J. Kelly High School of Wise, Virginia in June of 1969. The following August he entered Clinch Valley College of the University of Virginia and in May, 1973 received the Bachelor of Arts in English literature. In September of that same year he entered The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and in June, 1974 he received the Master of Arts in speech and theatre.

After working for one year as an admissions counselor and director of student housing, he was named Director of Admissions and faculty member in speech at Clinch Valley College of the University of Virginia. After serving in this capacity for four years, he entered the College of Communications at The University of Tennessee in the fall of 1979. In the fall of 1980 he accepted a full-time position as Assistant to the President for Development at Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tennessee.