

What's in a name? Measuring the potential influence of medical cannabis labels on attitudes toward its use.

Theory

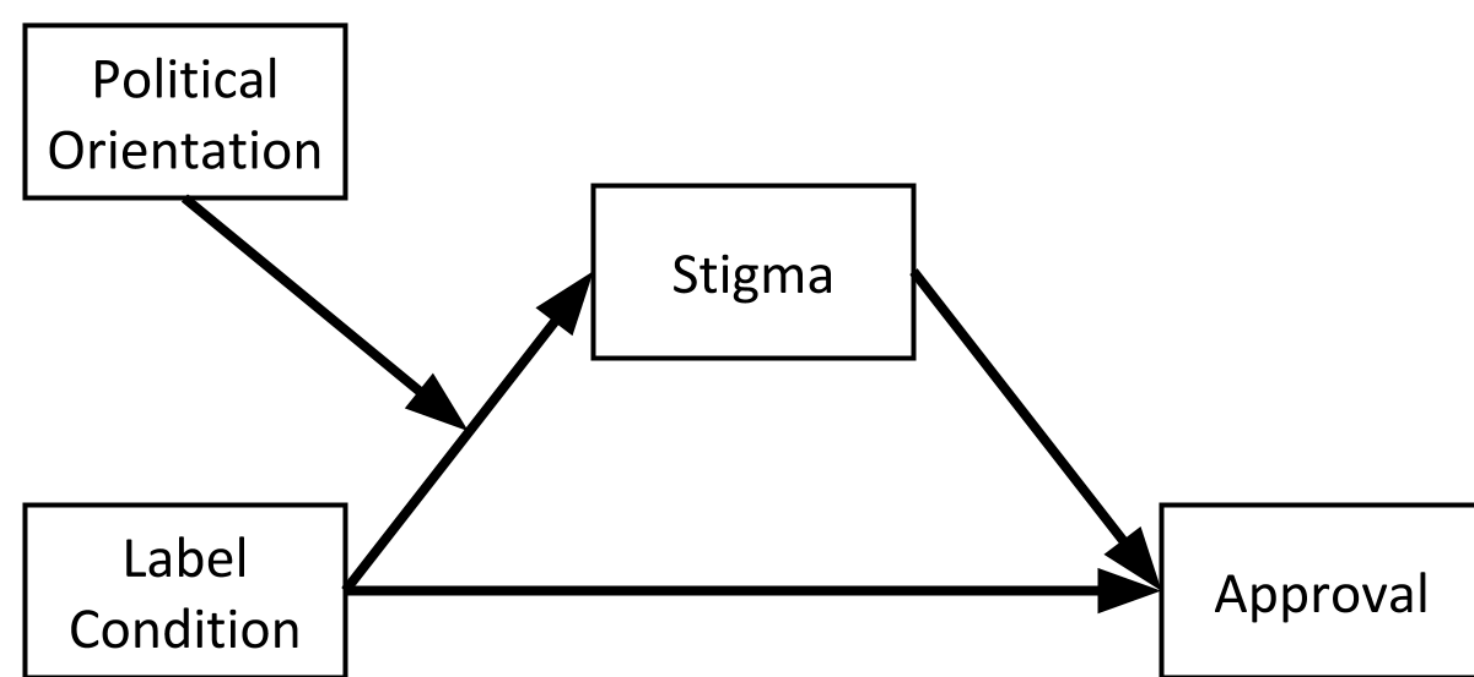
Social Validity. This is the theory that acceptance and use of a treatment does not always depend on its clinical efficacy.

Persuasion and the Elaboration Likelihood Model. This model predicts that attitudes are formed by both peripheral and central routes of information processing.

Past research suggests a connection between marijuana stigma and its approval as a treatment (Rudski, 2014; Lewis & Sznitman, 2017). Also, liberals are generally more pro-marijuana than conservatives; therefore, I wanted to examine the role of political orientation on stigma.

Hypotheses

Seeing marijuana (vs. nabiximols) will decrease approval, increase preference for prohibitive policy, increase stigma, and increase moral conviction for treatment attitudes.



Participants

I recruited 150 participants from MTurk using TurkPrime. Cases for 138 participants remained after data cleaning.

Measures

Treatment approval (eight-item; $\alpha = .9$)
 "This treatment is an acceptable treatment for cancer pain."

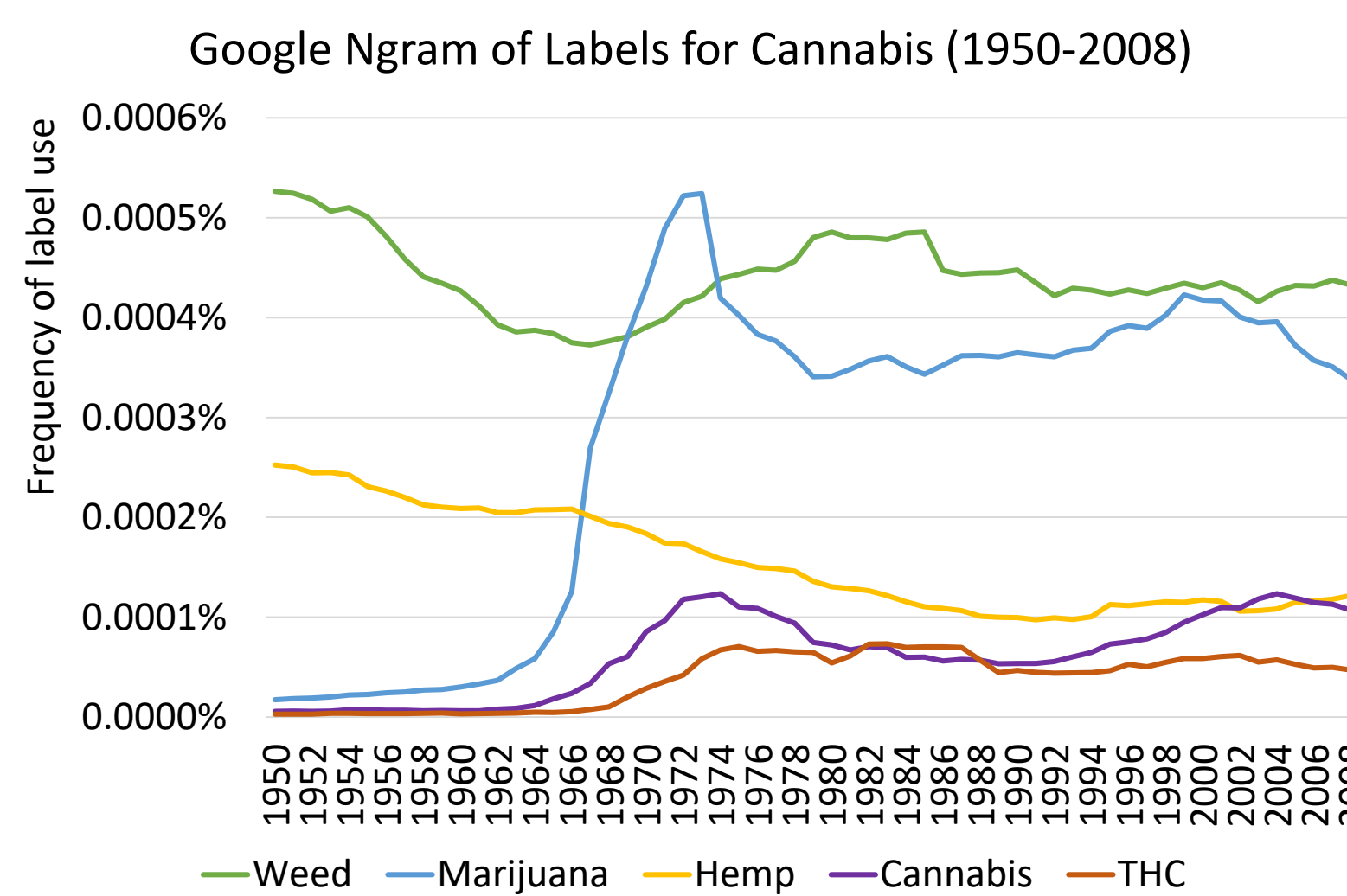
Stigma (four-items; $\alpha = .8$)
 "I would be ashamed to use marijuana to treat cancer pain."

Policy preference for medical cannabis (three-items; $\alpha = .8$)
 "Cannabis should be legal OTC, prescribed, and for research."

Moral conviction (one-item) My feelings on marijuana reflect my fundamental beliefs about right and wrong.

Political orientation (one-item; 1 = *very lib.* to 5 = *very con.*)

Manipulation "The Journal of the American Medical Association (2015) recently published a review of the effectiveness and safety of [label] for treating pain due to cancer as well as other types of chronic pain. They found moderate-quality evidence to support the use of [label] for the treatment of chronic pain. On average, patients with pain due to cancer reported a reduction of pain greater than 30% when using [label] compared to when using the placebo (i.e., mock/fake control treatment)..."



Using generic labels (marijuana and cannabis) compared to medical labels (THC and nabiximols) for treating pain due to cancer led to more stigma, which led to less treatment acceptability.

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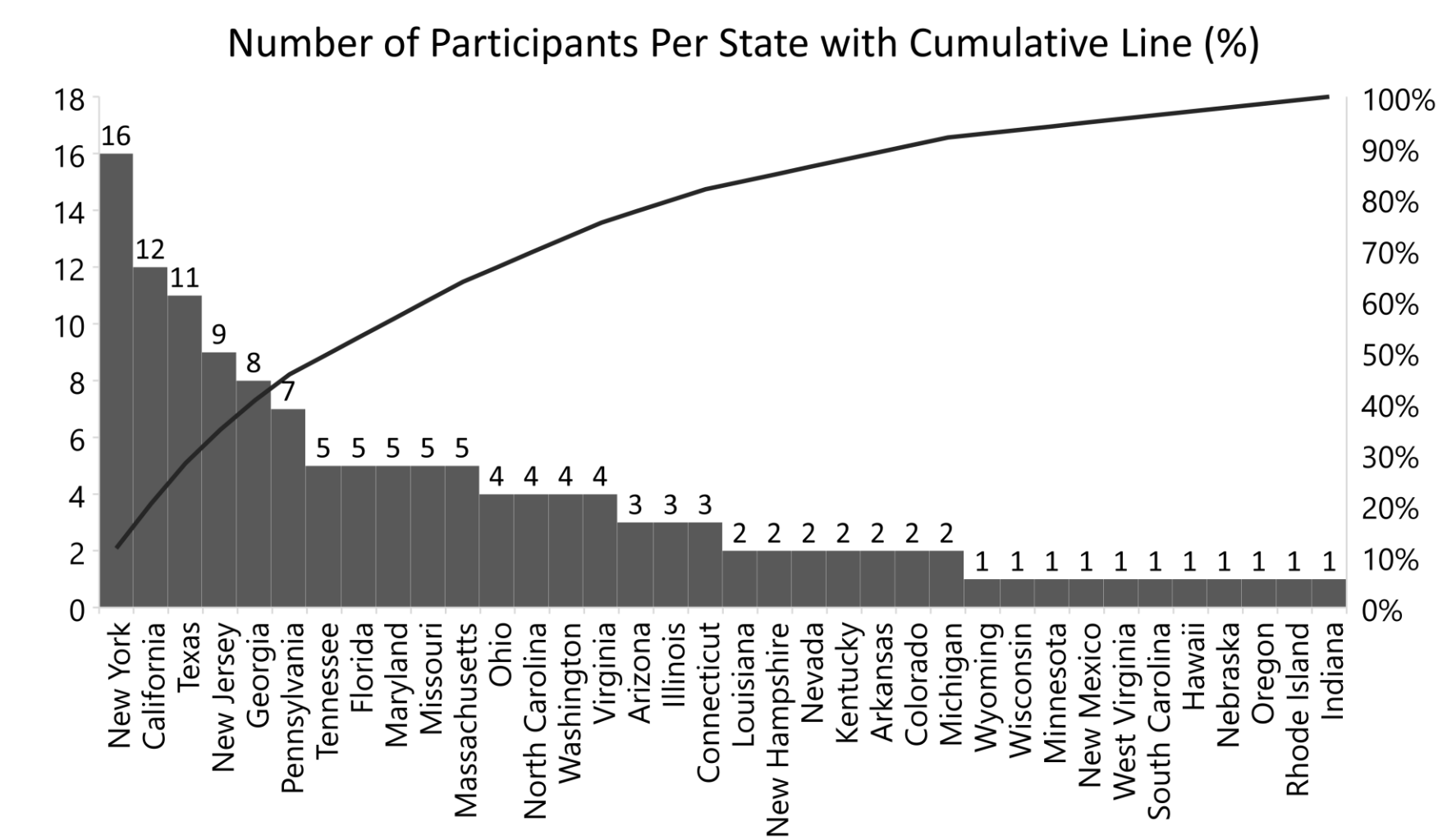
Rudski, J. M. (2014). Treatment acceptability, stigma, and legal concerns of medical marijuana are affected by method of administration. *Journal of Drug Issues, 44*, 308–320. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022042613511441>

Lewis, N., & Sznitman, S. R. (2017). You brought it on yourself: The joint effects of message type, stigma, and responsibility attribution on attitudes toward medical cannabis. *Journal of Communication, 67*, 181–202. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12287>

Pre-registered Hypotheses

- Label → Approval
- Label → Policy Preference
- Label → Stigma
- Label → Moral Conviction
- Moderated Mediation Model

Red = No evidence to support hypothesis
 Green = Some evidence to support hypothesis

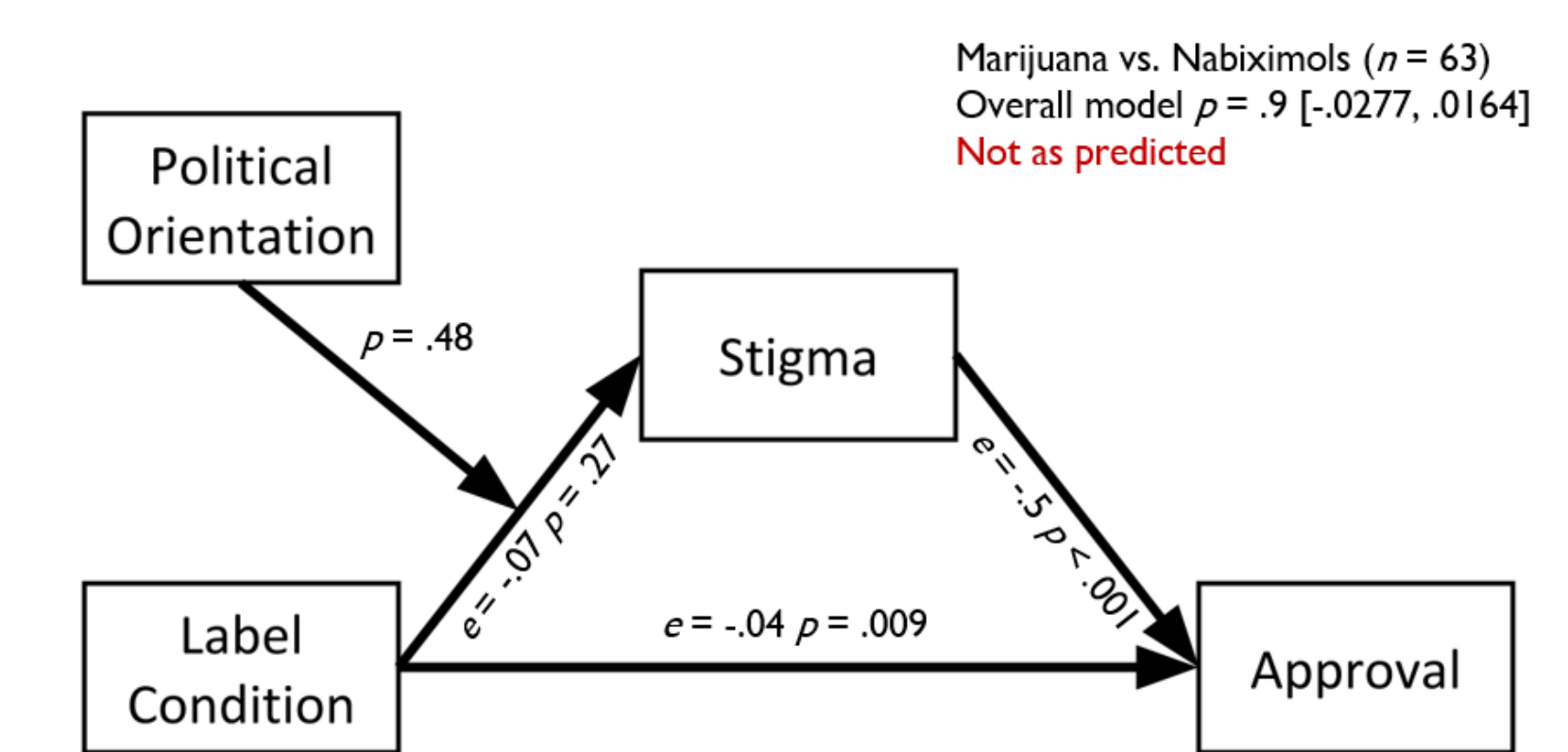
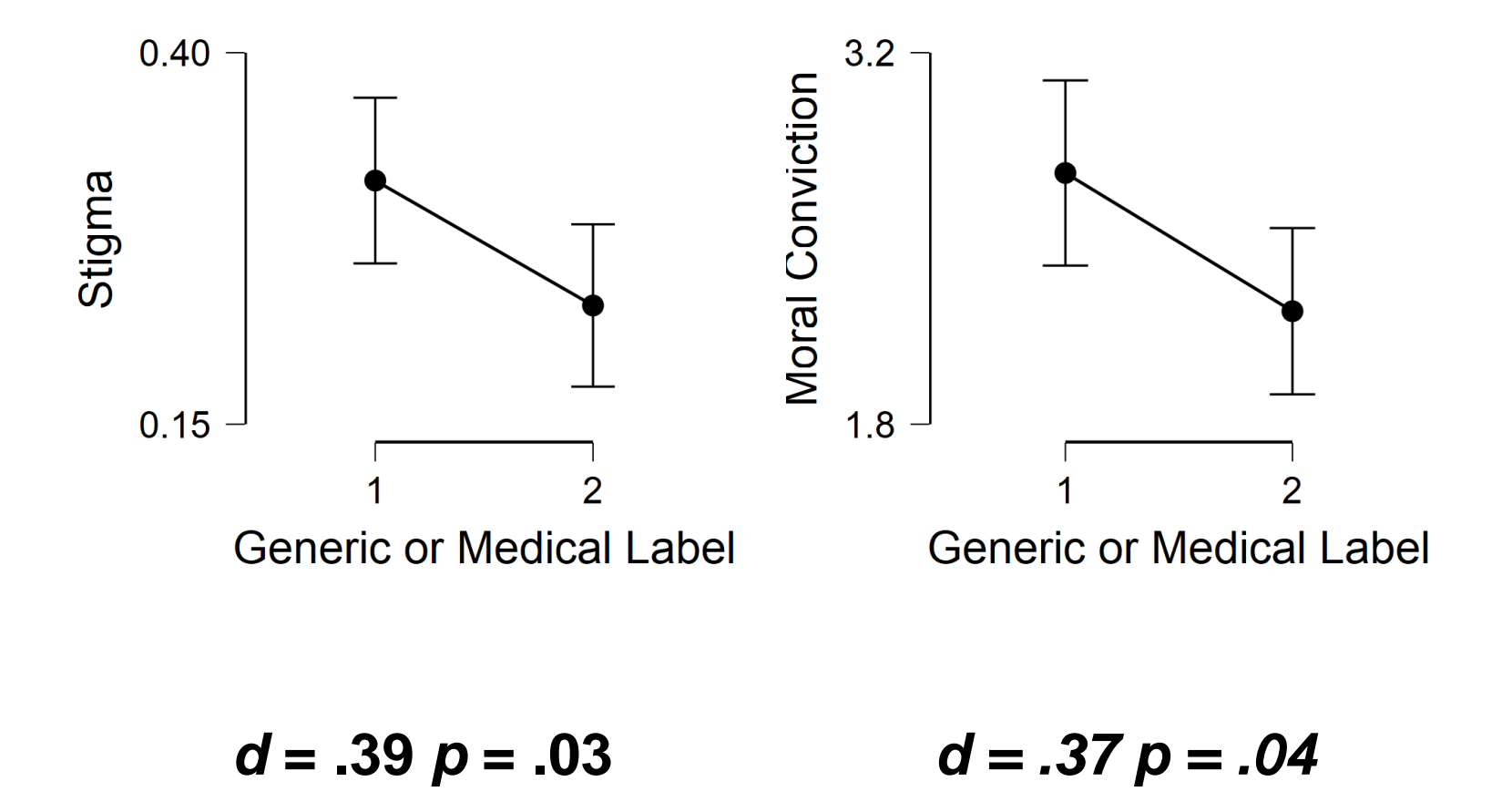


- Demographics**
- Gender → 53% female
 - Ethnicity → 77% white
 - Mean age → 37 years old
 - Political orientation
 - 36% moderate
 - 37% liberal
 - 27% conservative
- Response Rate → 85%**
- Yes → 58%
 - No → 38%
 - No response → 4%
- Lifetime Cannabis Use**
- Note: The option to group labels as generic and medical was done post-hoc. The mediation analysis without political orientation was post-hoc.

Pearson Correlation Matrix

	Moral Conviction	Stigma	Approval	Policy Preference
Moral Conviction	—			
Stigma	0.294	—		
Approval	-0.029	-0.563	—	
Policy Preference	-0.071	-0.562	0.767	—

Bold indicates p < .001



Mediation

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		Z	p	% Mediation
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	a × b	0.0418	0.0191	0.00430	0.0802	2.19	0.029	32.8
Direct	c	-0.0857	0.0240	-0.13387	-0.0372	3.57	< .001	67.2
Total	c + a × b	-0.0438	0.0310	-0.10424	0.0177	1.41	0.157	100.0

Path Estimates

Label	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		Z	p	
			Lower	Upper			
Generic or Medical Label → Stigma	a	-0.0858	0.0393	0.164	0.00818	2.18	0.029
Stigma → Approval	b	-0.4876	0.0569	0.594	0.36617	8.56	< .001
Generic or Medical Label → Approval	c	-0.0857	0.0240	0.134	0.03716	3.57	< .001