

# John “drinks”? Or John “is a drinker”?

## Implying a Disordered Identity Affects Perceived Functioning

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### Introduction

There is some evidence to suggest that using nouns (e.g., “Jane is a carrot eater”) to describe an individual’s behaviour is more closely tied to an individual’s identity than using non-nouns (e.g., “Jane eats carrots”; Gelman, 1999). The current research applies this distinction for the first time to psychological disorders.

To examine the effects of implying identity on impressions of adaptive functioning, 220 participants will be lead through a manipulation describing another person’s behaviour using either one of two nouns (drinker or gambler) or one of two non-nouns (drinks or gambles). They will then make ratings of another person’s level of adaptive functioning.

### Methods

	Noun	Non-noun
Behaviours	John “is a Drinker”	John “Drinks”
	John “is a Gambler”	John “Gambles”

### Manipulation

In a paragraph about "John", participants will describe him by actively writing down the phrase of their condition (e.g., a gambler, a drinker, gambles, drinks) in several blank spaces within the paragraph.

**Impressions of Functioning Measure**  
Participants will then make ratings of John’s adaptive functioning (e.g., extent to which he feels happy, is successful in school, feels a sense of purpose in life). This evaluates how likely John is to exhibit evidense of positive mental health.

### Predicted Results



Our prediction is that conceiving John as a drinker or gambler (noun condition) will lead to lower ratings of adaptive functioning when compared to conceiving him as someone who drinks or a gambles (non-noun condition).

### Discussion

