When Scarcity Mind-Set Promotes Prosocial Behaviours: A Waste Reduction Perspective

Xue Wang  
Chinese University of Hong Kong

Xianchi Dai  
CUHK Business School, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Kao Si  
University of Macau

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Abstract

Existing literature finds that scarcity makes people focus on their self-interest and decreases their propensity to engage in prosocial behaviors. In the current project we propose that scarcity makes people more concerned about waste reduction. That is, under situations when there is waste involved, people under a scarcity mind-set are more likely to make decisions to avoid waste. When the waste avoidance concern is in conflict with self-interest, people high in resource scarcity could choose to incur additional cost to reduce waste, thus exhibiting altruistic behaviour. A series of studies tested the current propositions and examined the conditions under which the current effect occurs.

Keywords: scarcity; waste; prosocial-behaviour

Track: Consumer Behaviour