

An Exploration of the Role of Recipient Stigma in Virtuous Gift Giving

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Abstract

Stigmatization and discrimination are prevalent concerns in contemporary society, leading to adverse psychological and physical consequences for individuals facing stigma-related prejudice. However, how and why stigma plays a role in gift-giving is largely unexplored. This research explores how the giver's perception of recipient's competence and appreciation by the recipient determines the choice of the gift. Across two experimental studies, we show that givers (especially male) perceive a stigmatized recipient to have low competence and hence low appreciation for a virtuous choice. Despite knowing this the givers choose the virtuous gift as they consider the stigmatized individuals incapable of caring for themselves and are motivated to appear virtuous. In contrast, female givers choose the vice option to avoid offending the stigmatized recipients. Overall, we observe the gift-givers choose the virtue option more for all recipients, but the vice option when choosing for themselves.

Keywords: *stigma, gift-giving, virtue choice*

Track: *Consumer Behaviour*