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PAPER PRESENTATION

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When social recognition inhibits prosocial behaviors: the case of charitable giving?

Workshop: Consumer behavior issues

Type of paper: Empirical

Abstract:

As a form of prosocial behavior, the social dimension of charitable giving has been highlighted by researchers and practitioners as a key determinant of generosity. Consequently, charitable organizations are making increasing use of the dimension by notably publicly thank private donors. Although the positive impact of public recognition on donations is not free of debate, prior literature generally assumed that such social reward will at worst have a neutral effect on people's generosity. Through a series of experiments, we challenge that statement and propose that, depending on donators' need for social approval, the presence of a public recognition might actually reduce generosity. Indeed, it appears that among people with low need for social approval, donations would decrease if they are made public. The present research provides a better understanding of the role of social reward in the context of prosocial behaviors and more specifically with charitable giving. Implications and theoretical contributions are discussed and leads for future research are finally presented.