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The Impact of Beneficiary Facial Expressions on Donation Intention in Medical Crowdfunding

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Abstract: In recent years, medical crowdfunding has become an emerging and effective way to raise funds for patients with severe illness and their families, and has solved huge economic problems for many families. This study studies the information expression of medical crowdfunding projects. This study combines the S-O-R model, considered the model of altruistic and egoistic motives for helping, adopted laboratory research methods, studied the effect of the facial expressions of beneficiary on individual donate intention. The results showed that individual altruism and guilt can positively influence individual donate intention. The facial expressions of beneficiaries affected both egoistic motivation and altruism motivation at the same time, and there were significant differences in the two types of motivation. In addition, research has found that individual guilt has a moderating effect on altruism. This study enriched the research of the SOR model and the altruistic and self-interest motivation model in the context of medical crowdfunding, at the same time studied the impact of facial expressions on personal motivation to provide recommendations for medical crowdfunding content writing.

Keywords: medical crowdfunding, facial expression, guilt, altruism

In recent years, social media such as WeChat and Weibo as well as third-party payment platforms have provided a basis for the development of medical crowdfunding. Compared with traditional charitable donations, medical crowdfunding has the characteristics of high efficiency, transparency, and pertinence, and can quickly raise funds for patients seeking help. However, although many medical crowdfunding platforms have developed rapidly and performed well today, they still face the problems of many projects failing to achieve their stated goals and shortage of medical assistance funds. Therefore, how to improve individual's donate intention to medical crowdfunding projects has become an issue of great concern to both academia and industry.

In general, a medical crowdfunding project mainly includes information such as text, pictures and fundraising goals. Among them, pictures occupy a more prominent position on the page. Compared with text, pictures can convey more intuitive information. Therefore, some projects attach pictures of the beneficiary's facial emotional state (positive or negative). Researching the facial expressions of people in pictures is a hot research topic in the donation literature^[1]. However, the existing research also has inconsistent conclusions about which facial emotional state in projects may promote the donation of potential donors. This article combined the SOR^[2] model and considered the egoistic motivation and altruistic motivation of individuals in donation simultaneously^[3], and explored how the facial expressions of beneficiaries stimulate the intrinsic motivation of individuals, and ultimately affect their donate intention.

H1: Individuals' altruism positively affects donate intention

H2: Individuals' guilt positively affects their donate intention.

H3: Individuals' guilt has a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between altruism and donation intention.

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H4: Compared with negative facial expressions, beneficiaries' positive facial expressions can stimulate individuals to be more altruistic.

H5: Compared with positive facial expressions, beneficiaries' negative facial expressions can motivate individuals to have higher guilt

The study used laboratory experiments. The participants consisted of 86 students and staff from a university. The participants scanned a crowdfunding page developed by the researchers and completed a questionnaire. SPSS 24.0 and AMOS 22.0 were used for data analysis. The results show that all hypotheses are supported. According to the experimental results, we found that guilt and altruism positively affect individuals' donate intention, negative facial expressions affect individuals' guilt, and positive facial expressions affect individual altruism. Guilt plays a moderating role between altruism and donate intention.

We believe this research has contributed the study of individuals' facial expression for charity crowdfunding filed. The theoretical contribution of this study is mainly reflected in three aspects. First, our study from the perspective of motivation and combined the SOR model to study how the facial expressions of beneficiaries can dynamically affect individual donation in medical crowdfunding. Second, we explore the moderating effects of guilt on individual altruism. Third, as in previous studies, many scholars have studied individual expression, but the results have been inconsistent.

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