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Factors Explaining Helping Beggars: A Modeling Study

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Abstract

Begging is a universally accepted phenomenon that has existed since ancient times, is similar in many cultures, and beggars as a group are primarily despised and highly stigmatized. Although many countries have made legal regulations to prevent begging, it is a universal phenomenon and a highly visible socio-economic and physical problem in most cities. The study's results generally indicate the multidimensional structure of attitudes toward begging. Two constructs frequently identified are individual and structural explanations of begging. While the individualist explanation emphasizes individual/personal deficits as the primary cause of begging, the structural explanation emphasizes the deficits in the market economy. The study's primary purpose is to determine how begging, which has a multi-dimensional structure, is perceived by society and how the attitude towards beggars is shaped when they come into contact with them. Based on the results of the study conducted in the field, the factors thought to affect attitudes towards beggars were religious tendency, perception of individualism and collectivism, level of altruism, and basic empathy level, and the relationships between these variables were evaluated. Structural equation model was used in the research. The research was conducted with a total of 338 participants, 187 of whom were women and 151 of whom were men, with an average age of 33. The most important result of the study is that religious orientation is critical to the attitude of helping beggars. In addition, the results showed that the perception of collectivism, altruism, and empathy indirectly affected attitudes towards beggars.

Keywords: altruism; beggary; helping behavior; poverty; street begging