

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, April 20, 2015

Where: 245 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:15 pm

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Overly Specific Gift Giving: Givers Choose Personalized but Less-Versatile and Less-Preferred Gifts

ABSTRACT: Gift givers often struggle to select gifts that recipients are likely to appreciate. This research shows that givers favor gifts that are specifically appropriate for the recipient but are less versatile than what the recipient would prefer to receive, largely because givers tend to focus on recipients' unique traits and personalities rather than on their multiple, varying wants and needs. Givers favor overly specific gifts even when they first consider what they themselves would prefer to receive, and they mistakenly believe that recipients will consider these gifts to be more thoughtful and likeable. This tendency is exacerbated when givers are especially motivated to show how well they know recipients, such as when givers select gifts for relationship partners instead of friends, and it is attenuated by encouraging givers to focus on recipients' current wants and needs. Finally, this tendency can contribute to gift nonuse: recipients take longer to redeem gift cards that are more specific, but givers fail to anticipate this and favor specific over general gift cards.

