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PRESENTING NEED AND CONTESTING ONLINE BEGGING: IDENTITY-RELEVANT EVALUATIONS ON TIKTOK LIVE

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ABSTRACT
Public requests for support on TikTok LIVE generate competing judgments concerning the legitimacy of such activities and the identities of those performing them, raising questions about how creators present themselves and respond to potentially stigmatizing evaluations. This study examines identity presentation, viewer responses, and the evidentiary basis for identifying stigma-management practices in TikTok LIVE interactions. Employing qualitative document analysis informed by Goffman's concept of spoiled identity, the study analyzes 13 account-specific observation forms documenting creators' recorded presentations, selected viewer comments, and explicit references to hostility. The findings reveal that creators construct their identities through narratives of need, work, care, and authenticity, while viewers variously interpret their activities as begging, entertainment, or potential livelihood, question their credibility, impose conditions for acceptance, or express support. One creator reframes insults through religious interpretation, although the available documentation does not establish a direct connection to any specific viewer comment. These findings demonstrate that competing evaluations shape the relevance of identity without establishing a unified audience judgment, persistent stigmatization, or consistently effective stigma-management strategies. The study contributes a source-sensitive analytical framework for distinguishing identity presentation from empirically documented responses to discredit.

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INTRODUCTION

A public request for support may express everyday need, work or family responsibility. Its social meaning does not follow from the creator's presentation alone. Selected TikTok comments describe support-seeking as begging, entertainment or a possible livelihood. Each label brings different features of the practice into view and invites approval, scepticism or objection. This article examines those classifications and asks when a judgment about a practice also concerns the person performing it (Robson, 2023). Craig et al. (2026) report sympathy and entertainment

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among reasons for virtual gifting in a separate TikTok study. Their findings provide a comparison, not evidence about viewers in the present corpus.

The social significance of these interactions becomes particularly evident when considering the scale of TikTok LIVE and its integration into digital economies of visibility and audience support. According to TikTok's official 2024 platform report, more than 100 million creators conducted LIVE broadcasts worldwide, while users generated approximately 269 billion LIVE chat messages (TikTok, 2025). The same report indicates that approximately 250,000 LIVE creators doubled their income compared with the preceding year, illustrating the economic significance of livestreaming for some participants. These platform-reported figures do not establish the prevalence of public support-seeking or stigmatizing judgments, but they demonstrate the scale of the environment in which creators publicly negotiate legitimacy, credibility, and audience recognition. Public requests for support therefore warrant sociological examination because they expose how economic need, self-presentation, and moral evaluation intersect within highly visible digital interactions.

This distinction matters because an activity label, a challenge to a personal claim, and a judgment about a person have different evidentiary implications. Calling a request "begging" may disapprove of the practice without establishing an enduring identity ascribed to the creator. A challenge to a family narrative may question the claim, the claimant, or both; its target must be established from the wording (Aulia et al., 2026). A creator's statement and a viewer's comment appearing in the same observation form are likewise not necessarily conversational turns. The study treats these distinctions as empirical questions rather than assuming that every negative comment constitutes stigma or that every subsequent presentation constitutes resistance.

Existing scholarship offers complementary rather than interchangeable explanations. Oorschot (2000) directs attention to potentially discrediting encounters, while Preter & Lerner (2024) distinguish negative labelling from a fuller process of stigma involving power and status loss. Research on networked audiences shows why online presentations may be encountered by differently situated viewers (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Scholarship on relational labour, TikTok visibility, and platform-based cultural production situates creator–audience connection and monetisation within wider digital practices (Abidin, 2020; Baym, 2015; Nosek et al., 2002). These perspectives clarify why public requests for support may invite different readings; none, by itself, establishes what the viewers recorded in this study meant or how any creator responded.

A further strand concerns the normative grounds on which assistance is judged. Oorschot (2000) analysis of deservingness concerns public attitudes toward welfare recipients, not TikTok gifting, and is used here only as a sensitising comparison: references to need, reciprocity, or responsibility can make different justifications for support intelligible. The relevance of this comparison must be tested against the wording of the recorded comments rather than assumed from the fact that a creator asks for gifts. Similarly, a viewer's allegation of deception is evidence of scepticism, not evidence that the creator deceived anyone; a viewer's description of an activity as work does not establish actual earnings.

Research addresses TikTok gifting, creator labour and digital stigma. Yet an important evidentiary question remains for Goffman's account of spoiled identity. When does an objection to online begging discredit a person? When can a creator's subsequent presentation be identified as managing that discredit? This article examines recorded presentations and selected evaluations without presuming that they form a continuous exchange. Its contribution concerns the boundary between a potentially discrediting label and a documented response to stigma. A related semiotic study examines representations of poverty exploitation in TikTok content (Ramdani et al., 2025). The present study instead distinguishes the targets of evaluation and the evidence for identity management.

The central social-identity question concerns how activity labels shape the recognition or discrediting of conduct. Those labels are not inherently personal identities. Preter & Lerner (2024) examine class-based symbolic rivalry in Russian-language migrant discourse through digital ethnography. Their analysis highlights the social location of labels and the relations among those who use them. It does not establish comparable group boundaries or

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status effects among these TikTok viewers. Naudé (2023) examines how emerging adults narrate relations between self and society through social media. Her interviews provide a different route to identity meaning-making. The present study instead asks what identity-relevant meanings appear in selected recorded evaluations. It cannot establish shared group positions, lived identity negotiation or consequential stigma.

Nieborg et al. (2020) and Link & Phelan (2001) help distinguish potentially discrediting encounters from a fuller process of stigmatization. Fairclough (2010) informs attention to what an utterance classifies, challenges, conditions, or invites, and to whom it is directed. Deservingness scholarship provides a comparative vocabulary for articulated grounds of support, without importing a welfare-policy model wholesale into voluntary LIVE gifting. These perspectives guide the reading of recorded language; they do not supply missing information about audience composition, platform effects, or temporal interaction.

The study examines existing qualitative observation records relating to TikTok-based requests for support. Its primary material comprises 13 account-specific forms that contain creator statements, selected comments, and observer descriptions or interpretations. Supplementary screenshots and short LIVE videos are not treated as case-specific corroboration where their correspondence to the forms remains unverified. This source structure supports comparison of recorded presentations and evaluations, but not estimates of audience opinion, verified comment–response sequences in every case, or conclusions about creators' personal circumstances. The novelty of this study lies in its source-sensitive analytical approach, which systematically distinguishes creators' identity presentations from documented audience evaluations and explicit responses to discredit, thereby establishing clearer evidentiary boundaries for interpreting stigma management in TikTok LIVE interactions.

This article asks two questions. RQ1: How do creators present themselves when seeking support amid potentially discrediting evaluations on TikTok LIVE? RQ2: Which recorded statements indicate identity management, and what evidence connects those statements to hostility? Activity labels and challenges to personal claims provide the evaluative context. A response is treated as stigma management only when the available record supports that interpretation.

The records document appeals to work and care, competing activity labels, credibility challenges, conditional acceptance and invitations to contribute. One creator explicitly reinterprets insults. The records do not establish a general sequence from stigma to identity repair. The article therefore treats stigma management as a question tested against the available evidence, not an outcome assumed in advance.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Identity presentation, activity classification, and potentially discrediting evaluation

Three objects of analysis must be kept distinct: a creator's presented position, a viewer's description of the support-seeking activity, and an evaluation directed at a particular claim or person. The objects may overlap within an utterance, but their relationship must be established rather than presumed. References to work, care, need, and authenticity are recorded presentations, not independent confirmation of personal circumstances. Likewise, a negative label for an activity may be identity-relevant without, by itself, identifying an enduring personal status. The analysis therefore begins with the target and wording of the available statement.

Harrington (2025) conceptualises stigma in relation to social expectations and the possibility that an attribute or presentation becomes discrediting in an encounter. This perspective directs attention to how an activity or person may be evaluated against expectations of acceptable conduct. It does not license treating every request for support as a spoiled identity, or every expression of gratitude or authenticity as a response to stigma. A claim about a creator responding to an identifiable evaluation requires evidence linking the two statements; otherwise, the record documents a presentation and an evaluation whose interactional relationship remains unknown.

Link and Phelan (2001) place labelling within a broader account of stigma involving stereotyping, separation, status loss, discrimination, and power. Their account makes the distinction between an evaluative label and an established process of stigmatization consequential. Selected comments can demonstrate that a label was articulated,

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and their wording may indicate potential discrediting; they cannot by themselves demonstrate sustained status loss, institutional discrimination, or the distribution of a judgment across an audience. The article therefore uses "potentially discrediting evaluation" for the narrower phenomenon accessible in its records.

Online presentation also need not be received uniformly. Marwick & Boyd (2011) analysis of imagined audiences and context collapse on Twitter provides a conceptual reason to avoid assuming a single, homogeneous reception of a public-facing presentation. Their study does not establish who watched the TikTok LIVE broadcasts in this corpus or what any viewer intended. Here, the contrast between supportive, sceptical, and disapproving comments is an observed difference among selected statements, not a measure of audience composition, consensus, or attitude change. Together, these perspectives make the relation between a creator's presented position and a viewer's activity or person-directed classification an empirical question.

Recent work in Social Identities provides a useful contrast in evidentiary design. Naudé (2023) draws on interviews with emerging adults to examine how online engagement figures in narratives of self and society; the present corpus contains neither comparable retrospective accounts of identity development nor a representative audience sample. Preter & Lerner (2024), by contrast, investigate class-based symbolic rivalry in migrant discourse through digital ethnography. Their findings make the relation between a category and a socially situated group an important question, but they cannot be transferred to the TikTok cases as an observed class conflict. These comparisons motivate attention to the referent and social implications of labels while keeping claims about group identification and social exclusion conditional on evidence.

Requests for support, deservingness, and competing accounts of creator activity

Requests for support invite judgments about what is being requested, why support is warranted, and which activities count as acceptable ways of obtaining it. Oorschot (2000) examines criteria through which welfare recipients are judged deserving of assistance. Welfare provision and voluntary gifts during a live broadcast are different institutional settings; his framework is therefore used as a sensitising comparison rather than as a ready-made scale of TikTok viewer attitudes. References to need, work, responsibility, or reciprocity may offer different justifications for support, but the interpretation must follow the actual wording of each recorded comment. A non-harm condition, for example, is directly articulated where a viewer explicitly makes acceptance conditional on not harming others; a claim that the viewer consciously applied a broader deservingness framework would exceed that evidence.

Research on digital creator activity complicates a binary distinction between work and asking for help. Baym (2015) describes relational labour in sustained audience connection; Duffy (2017) distinguishes visible social media labour from assumptions about compensation; and Abidin (2020) examines attention economies and visibility labour on TikTok. These accounts provide context for understanding why viewers might frame a broadcast as performance, labour, or solicitation. They do not establish that the creators studied here earned income, performed a particular amount of labour, or strategically cultivated relationships. Duffy & Hund (2015) work on self-branding among fashion bloggers similarly provides a comparison concerning self-presentation, not evidence that these creators engaged in the same practices.

Platform scholarship places cultural production within economic and infrastructural arrangements Duffy et al. (2019) . Such arrangements matter as context for digital gifting, but the observation forms do not document TikTok's recommendation mechanisms, individual earnings, or the conversion of a particular appeal into a gift. The analysis therefore concerns the meaning attached to a visible support-seeking activity, not an inferred business model or verified economic outcome. An invitation to contribute, an expression of thanks, and a viewer's designation of an activity as "livelihood" are different observable statements and should not be collapsed into a completed transaction (Poell et al., 2019).

A directly related study of TikTok "online begging" by Dhamayanti et al. (2024) uses a symbolic-interaction perspective to examine streamers, audiences, and virtual gifts; its published abstract reports varied reasons for gifting, including sympathy and entertainment. This work makes a broad claim of novelty about the existence of TikTok

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support-seeking research untenable. This article instead examines a narrower, document-grounded question: how selected comments offer competing classifications of support-seeking activity, and how those classifications stand alongside creators' recorded presentations. Its materials cannot establish individual gift-giving motives, even when a viewer explicitly encourages others to contribute.

The categories "begging," "entertainment," and "livelihood" should not be treated as interchangeable descriptions of the same underlying fact. In the selected material, they offer different possible grounds of evaluation: disapproval of solicitation, recognition of a performance, or a possible account of earning a living. Their meanings remain dependent on the surrounding recorded utterance. A sympathetic comment does not verify need; an allegation of deception does not verify deception; and the word "livelihood" does not establish employment or remuneration. This distinction connects the normative question of acceptable support to the identity question of how activities—and sometimes the people performing them—are socially positioned.

A bounded, discourse-informed framework for the two research questions

Fairclough (2010) connects textual choices with discourse practice and social practice. In this article, the most directly accessible material is the wording preserved in selected comments and creator statements. Close reading identifies the referent of a statement (activity, creator, or other viewers), its linguistic action (classification, challenge, condition, defence, appeal, or acknowledgment), and any expressly invoked ground of evaluation. Interpretation then asks whether that action classifies a practice, potentially discredits a person, or articulates a justification for support. The analysis does not infer a community-wide norm merely because one viewer expresses an expectation.

Goffman and Fairclough serve distinct but connected functions. Attention to wording identifies what a recorded statement does; the stigma perspective asks whether the statement can plausibly be read as discrediting a person rather than merely describing an activity. Deservingness scholarship supplies comparative questions about the grounds on which support is justified or challenged, without attributing a psychological motive or a complete normative scheme to any viewer. A creator's statement and a viewer's comment may be compared as positions within an account-specific record; they are analysed as a direct exchange only when their relationship is independently documented.

This framework distinguishes five analytical steps: identify the source and speaker category; describe the recorded words or observer-reported action; identify the stated activity classification or evaluative ground; assess whether an inference about identity is warranted by the wording; and separately test whether an identifiable comment–response relationship is documented. Creator statements, viewer comments, observer descriptions, and observer interpretations retain different evidentiary status. The steps are rules for interpreting the existing records, not a claim that complete transcripts, timestamps, or systematic audience sampling were collected.

For RQ1, the analysis juxtaposes creator presentations and selected evaluations within account-specific records, distinguishing comparison from documented exchange. For RQ2, it tests whether creator statements expressly refer to discredit and whether a response can be linked to a specific evaluation. Activity categories and evaluative grounds provide context for that test. The framework is discourse-informed rather than a reconstruction of discourse circulation or platform-level effects. Harrington (2025) provides a reminder that internet traces cannot stand in for complete offline lives; Nieborg et al. (2020) supplies context for platformed cultural production, not evidence that missing source relationships have been recovered.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative document analysis of account-specific digital observation records concerning public requests for support on TikTok. The primary corpus comprised 13 account-specific observation forms containing creator statements, selected viewer comments, observer descriptions, and interpretative notes. Each account-specific form served as the unit of cross-case comparison, while documented statements and actions constituted the units of textual analysis. Four screenshots and seven short TikTok LIVE videos were considered supplementary materials only when their correspondence to particular cases could be independently verified.

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The analytical procedure systematically distinguished direct statements, descriptions of observed actions, and interpretations recorded by observers. Each documented statement or action was examined in relation to its linguistic or behavioral characteristics and subsequently categorized according to its analytical function, including identity presentation, authenticity claims or challenges, activity labeling, expressions of acceptance, appeals for support, and responses to hostility. Within-case and cross-case analyses were conducted to compare creators' self-presentations with viewers' evaluations without presuming direct conversational exchanges where documentary evidence did not establish such connections. Analytical claims were formulated only when they could be traced to identifiable documentary evidence, thereby maintaining a clear distinction between empirical observations and interpretative inferences.

The trustworthiness of the analysis was strengthened by distinguishing descriptive records from observers' subjective assessments, considering alternative interpretations, and avoiding unsupported assumptions regarding creators' motivations, personal circumstances, or undocumented audience responses. Given the sensitivity of public support-seeking activities and the potential reputational implications of stigma-related research, the study adopted a context-sensitive ethical approach informed by Harrington (2025), emphasizing privacy protection, responsible interpretation, and the minimization of potential harm. Account identifiers, payment information, contact details, and other potentially identifying information were excluded from the research presentation, while the use of direct quotations requires careful consideration of their potential traceability to identifiable individuals. The ethical approval status and the applicability of informed consent requirements or permissible exemptions must be established in accordance with the relevant institutional research ethics procedures, particularly considering the distinction between publicly accessible content and material involving potentially vulnerable individuals. Because the original procedures for selecting accounts and comments, as well as the correspondence of all audiovisual materials, could not be fully reconstructed, the findings were restricted to interpretations supported by the available records and were not intended to represent the broader population of TikTok creators, viewers, or interactions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings distinguish recorded presentations, viewer evaluations, and evidence of identity management. Case identifiers refer to account-specific forms, not necessarily to single broadcasts. Comments preserved in one form are not presumed to be direct replies. The analysis paraphrases source material rather than offering unverified English translations as verbatim quotations.

Presenting Need, Work, Care and Authenticity

The C01 form records a creator describing limitations on working, children's needs, and a distinction between meeting daily needs and seeking wealth. This is a presentation of need and parental responsibility, not independent evidence of the circumstances described. C02 places tissue selling alongside requests or hopes for LIVE gifts. Its analytical significance is the co-documentation of selling and support-seeking, which resists an a priori division between "working" and "asking"; the record does not establish the creator's earnings or how viewers interpreted the combination. (Observation record: C01, O-2; C02, O-2).

C03 records a family-care presentation alongside two differently oriented selected comments: one encourages care for the creator's mother, while another alleges that the mother's circumstances are being used to obtain gifts. The contrast shows that a family reference can be taken up as an occasion for care-oriented support or for scepticism about the appeal. It does not establish the mother's circumstances, the allegation's truth, or a dialogue between commenters. Importantly, the second comment challenges the use of a family narrative; whether it also attributes a stable discrediting identity to the creator depends on its precise original wording. (Observation record: C03, O-2 and O-3, comments 1 and 7).

C04 records an assertion that the presentation is not an act, alongside requests for gifts and gestures of appreciation. C05 preserves a sceptical comment about crying as performance and a separate sympathetic comment; C06 records a viewer's objection to what that viewer characterises as selling sadness. Authenticity is therefore not

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simply a property that the analyst can assign to a creator: it is asserted in one recorded presentation and contested in selected evaluations elsewhere. No specific hostile comment is documented as the trigger for C04's assertion, and the accusations do not establish fabrication (Observation record: C04, O-2/O-3; C05, O-3, comments 2–3; C06, O-3).

Potentially discrediting classifications and competing evaluations

The clearest contrast in activity classification appears in C06 and C07. In C06, a selected viewer uses "begging" negatively, while another rejects that classification in favour of "entertainment". In C07, a negative "begging" classification appears alongside a comment proposing that the activity may be a way of earning a livelihood. The categories are alternative descriptions supplied by selected viewers, not researcher-verified facts about the creators' economic position or the nature of the broadcasts. The available forms do not establish whether these comments were mutually addressed, appeared in chronological sequence, or persuaded other viewers. (Observation record: C06, O-3; C07, O-3, comments 4–5).

These contrasts matter because the category selected changes the aspect of the practice made salient for evaluation. "Begging" in the recorded negative uses marks the request itself as objectionable; "entertainment" foregrounds the visible performance; and the tentative livelihood description introduces the possibility of work. The claim is limited to these recorded uses: the words do not carry a uniform moral value independently of their surrounding utterances. In particular, an activity-directed label must not automatically be recoded as a judgment of the creator's enduring identity. Verification of the original language and its addressee is required before making a stronger person-directed interpretation.

Conditional acceptance and supportive evaluations

The selected evaluations do not reduce to approval versus disapproval. C07 includes a comment accepting the activity on the explicit condition that it does not harm others. This conditional statement specifies a criterion for acceptance but provides no evidence that harm did or did not occur. C08 contains a viewer appeal encouraging others to share coins and presenting sharing as not impoverishing the giver; C04 records another viewer invitation to send gifts. These utterances address different evaluative tasks: setting a condition on the practice and mobilising support from other viewers. Neither demonstrates an actual transfer resulting from the comment. (Observation record: C07, O-3, comment 7; C08, O-3, comment 3; C04, O-3, comment 7).

Read together with the authenticity challenges in C03–C06, these entries show that the grounds articulated in selected comments are heterogeneous: the credibility of a personal narrative, the acceptability of a practice under a non-harm condition, and reasons to contribute are not interchangeable criteria. A comment can invite generosity without making an explicit claim about the creator's identity; a sceptical comment can challenge a narrative without establishing deception. The analysis therefore records both the linguistic action and its target before drawing an identity-related inference.

The original observation forms also contain useful negative cases. In the Ade record, the observer notes supportive comments and no observed creator response during the session; this does not document active stigma management. The Buntung. mans form describes a self-presentation as a "fighter" and records supportive religious comments without a stigmatizing comment in that observed session. These records show why affirmative self-presentation and religious acknowledgment must be analysed separately from demonstrated responses to hostile evaluation. In the Boboy record, the observer reports a creator's religious reinterpretation of insults; this is stronger evidence for an expressed stance toward hostility, although the preserved material does not independently establish which particular comment elicited the statement.

Recorded responses and the limits of stigma-management claims

C07 describes prayers following gifts and the reposting of a gift-related moment; C04 describes appreciative gestures associated with support. These observer-reported actions warrant the narrower category of acknowledgment. They do not establish an agreed exchange, a viewer expectation of prayer, or a deliberate response to stigma. In contrast, the C06 creator utterance explicitly refers to insults and interprets them through the religious language of

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reduced sins. It provides evidence of an expressed reinterpretation of hostility, but no verified timestamp or reply linkage connects it to a particular recorded viewer comment. (Observation record: C07, O-2/field note; C04, O-2; C06, O-2/field note).

The C09 and C10 forms contain selected supportive comments without a documented hostile prompt. C09 also contains an observer-assigned field suggesting an explanation of negative comments; the recorded comments do not independently substantiate the corresponding interactional sequence. These cases prevent an assumption that requesting support necessarily entails observable stigma in every recorded case. They also show why support must be analysed as an evaluative position in its own right rather than merely as the absence of hostility. C11 includes a challenge to a presented identity alongside supportive expressions, but the record does not verify nationality or show that the creator saw and understood the challenge. (Observation record: C09, O-1/O-3; C10, O-2/O-3; C11, O-1/O-3).

Across the forms, creators present need, work, care and authenticity, while selected viewers offer different evaluations. C06 contains an explicit creator reference to insults and a religious reinterpretation of them. Other recorded gestures and statements cannot be classified as responses to stigma without a documented connection to hostility. The evidence therefore identifies a possible form of identity management in C06, not a uniform strategy across the corpus.

Discussion

From activity labels to potentially discrediting judgments

The C06–C07 comments classify support-seeking as begging, entertainment or possible livelihood. These descriptions foreground solicitation, performance or work, respectively. The negative use of "begging" can make a practice discreditable, but an activity label alone does not establish a spoiled personal identity. Goffman's framework therefore directs attention to the target of each judgment, not merely its negative tone.

For social identity research, this makes the target of evaluation consequential. Goffman (2009) helps identify the possibility of a discrediting encounter, while Zhang et al. (2024) caution against equating a label with an established process of stigma involving power and status loss. The records contain negative activity classifications and some challenges to personal narratives, but no evidence of sustained exclusion or changed standing. An activity-directed label can have social stakes without being sufficient proof of an identity assigned to the creator. The distinction is therefore a question to be investigated in each utterance, not a claim that practices and persons are socially separable in all circumstances.

This distinction also locates the article in relation to recent Social Identities research. Preter & Lerner (2024) trace stigmatizing class-based symbolic rivalry within a specified migrant setting; here, selected comments permit identification of activity labels but do not identify a comparably documented group conflict. Naudé (2023) explores identity meaning-making through participants' narrated online engagements, whereas the present study can only compare preserved creator statements and viewer evaluations. The resulting contribution is a more restricted account of identity relevance at the level of utterance and evaluative target, not a claim to have observed identity transformation.

Identity presentation under heterogeneous evaluation

A public request for support can become a site at which the legitimacy of an activity is articulated, challenged, or defended, even where no durable social identity or material exclusion can be established. The evidence also complicates any single opposition between hostile and supportive audiences. A family-care presentation, an authenticity challenge, a non-harm condition, and an invitation to give perform different evaluative actions; they arise across different speakers and cases. These statements cannot be combined into one audience-wide moral test. Rather, they demonstrate that a request may be made acceptable or objectionable through different explicitly articulated considerations. The supportive entries in C09–C10 are substantively important because they show that a stigma-centred reading cannot be imposed on every selected record.

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Oorschot (2000) account of deservingness helps formulate a comparative question about the grounds on which assistance is justified, but welfare provision and voluntary LIVE gifts differ institutionally. The recorded comments cannot establish a viewer's complete moral framework, a creator's actual need or honesty, or the occurrence of a gift transfer. The contribution is more specific: the comments make credibility, non-harm, and generosity available as distinct grounds for evaluating support-seeking, while the creators' references to work and care supply presentations against which some such judgments may be read.

What the records establish about stigma management

C06 offers the clearest evidence relevant to stigma management. The creator explicitly invokes insults and interprets them through religious language. This utterance can be analysed as a recorded reframing of hostility. However, the forms do not link it to any particular preserved comment or establish its effect on viewers. Expressions of gratitude, prayers following gifts and authenticity claims remain identity presentations or acknowledgments unless their relation to stigma is documented.

This distinction separates three levels of evidence: a potentially discrediting evaluation, a creator's presentation, and a documented response to hostility. Only the third level supports a specific interactional claim about stigma management. Co-presence in an observation form does not establish that a creator saw, understood or answered a particular comment.

Rather than treating all unfavourable utterances as equivalent instances of stigma, this study locates the point at which an interpretation moves from a practice to a claim about a person, and the further point at which an analyst would need interactional evidence to claim a response. The comparison yields a four-part analytical distinction: a creator's presented position, a viewer's classification of the practice, an evaluation of a claim or person, and a documented interactional response. The C06–C07 classifications support the first two distinctions, while the authenticity challenges and C06's reference to insults illustrate why the latter two require separate evidence. This framework retains supportive and conditional comments as substantive evaluations rather than treating them as deviations from an assumed stigma narrative.

The analysis concerns selected recorded statements. It does not establish audience consensus, enduring spoiled identity or successful stigma repair.

Analytical object	Documented material	Permissible inference
Creator presentation	Recorded references to work, care, need or authenticity	A presented position, not verified personal circumstances
Activity classification	Selected labels such as begging, entertainment or possible livelihood	An evaluation of a practice, not automatically a personal identity
Claim- or person-directed evaluation	Selected credibility challenges and supportive or conditional comments	A judgment whose target must be established from the wording
Interactional response	A creator statement explicitly referring to insults	An expressed interpretation of hostility, not a verified reply to a preserved comment

Note. This table synthesises the interpretation of selected observation records; it does not introduce new empirical observations or establish temporal links.

Limitations

The study relies primarily on structured observation forms rather than complete transcripts of all recorded sessions. Selected comments cannot establish the distribution of opinions among all viewers. Comment order in a form cannot be assumed to represent chronological order or a reply sequence. Some observer-assigned categories lack descriptive evidence needed to verify the corresponding interaction. The audiovisual inventory has not been fully matched to the forms.

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Creators' reported circumstances and viewers' accusations were not independently verified. The corpus does not support conclusions about long-term changes in audience attitudes, effectiveness of identity-management strategies, or changes in wider social norms.

CONCLUSION

The available TikTok records juxtapose appeals to need, work and care with competing evaluations of support-seeking. Some comments classify the activity negatively, while others invoke entertainment, possible livelihood, non-harm or generosity. These differences reveal the evaluative setting in which identity presentation occurs. They do not establish that every creator experienced or managed stigma.

C06 contains an explicit reinterpretation of insults through religious language. This is the clearest recorded statement relevant to stigma management. Its connection to a particular viewer comment, its timing and its effects remain unverified. Other presentations and acknowledgments cannot be recast as stigma-management strategies solely because negative comments also appear in the corpus.

The article contributes a bounded reading of Goffman's spoiled identity in a platform setting. It distinguishes potentially discrediting labels from documented responses to hostility. Future claims about sustained identity management require verified interactional sequences and fuller provenance. The present contribution lies in identifying both the available evidence and the threshold for stronger claims. Future research should employ longitudinal observations and systematically documented creator–viewer interactions to examine how stigma-related evaluations emerge, evolve, and potentially shape identity-management practices across different TikTok LIVE contexts.

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