Abstract
Although much prior research has examined people’s motivations for seeking luxury goods, we know little about what happens when people actually use luxury products. We provide the first examination of the behavioral effects of luxury consumption by experimentally testing how using luxury products influences social behavior. Focusing on prosocial behavior, we find that women using a luxury product exhibited less prosocial behavior—except when they were in a public setting that offered an opportunity to enhance their reputation by being prosocial. For example, women using a luxury product who were asked to donate money to a charity gave less when donating money in private, but gave more when donating money in front of other people. Further, we show that luxury product use influences prosocial behavior by boosting people’s sense of their own social status, but only if the luxury product is perceived as rare and exclusive, and if the luxury product is used in view of other people.

Dr Yajin Wang received her Ph.D. in marketing at University of Minnesota. She joined the marketing department at Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland as an assistant professor in 2015. Her research focuses on luxury brands and conspicuous consumption, and social/ interpersonal influence on consumer’s behavior. Her research has been published in Journal of Consumer Research and Psychological Science, and has been covered in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Harvard Business Review, BBC News, FOX News, and CNN.

All interested are welcome.