

“Ethical Hedonism? How Consumers’ Prosocial Behavior Varies Along the Utilitarian-Hedonic Product Spectrum: Evidence from a Survey Experiment.”

The marketing literature classifies products along a spectrum from utilitarian (e.g. rice) to hedonic (e.g. cannabis), and additionally using terms such as “luxury” and “illicit.” Research in business ethics has proposed a counter-intuitive mismatch between ethics and luxury, which has not yet been rigorously tested. This paper fills that gap by using a representative sample of roughly 2,000 consumers to conduct a survey experiment exploring consumers’ (potentially) divergent prosocial behavior in the face of varying product types. The findings will help activists, business leaders, and governments make efficient, effective decisions regarding their approach to the sustainability challenges posed by the luxury sector.