

Expressing passion for luxury enhances perceived authenticity

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Abstract

Consumers are often viewed unfavorably when using luxury products. They are seen as seeking status and managing impressions, and therefore judged as inauthentic. How can luxury consumers alleviate these negative social consequences? Our pilot studies suggest that although many consumers are passionate about luxury products and brands, they avoid sharing this passion with others because they fear being judged negatively. However, we propose that publicly expressing one's passion for luxury can mitigate the social costs of luxury consumption. Six experiments (including three supplemental experiments) show that expressing passion for luxury causes others to perceive luxury consumers as more authentic, consequently increasing perceptions of their warmth and trustworthiness, and leading others to demonstrate greater interest in knowing more about them. Expressing passion for luxury enhances perceived authenticity by prompting observers to attribute the luxury consumption more to intrinsic motivation (e.g., consuming luxury for inherent enjoyment and pleasure) rather than extrinsic motivation (e.g., status enhancement). The effects of passion expression are attenuated for non-luxury consumption because non-luxury consumption is generally unlikely to elicit inferences about extrinsic motives.

KEY WORDS

interpersonal judgment, intrinsic motivation, luxury consumption, passion expression, perceived authenticity

INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that individuals benefit from consuming luxury goods, whose defining characteristics include high price, exclusivity, and often-times conspicuousness (Cannon & Rucker, 2019; Chen et al., 2022; Hansen & Wänke, 2011; Wang, 2022; Wang & Griskevicius, 2014). Notably, luxury consumers are conferred higher status and elicit preferential treatment from others (Lee et al., 2015; Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). However, these benefits come with a hefty social price. Specifically, luxury consumers are often viewed as striving for status and managing impressions (Cannon & Rucker, 2019; Ferraro et al., 2013; Ho et al., 2023; Srna et al., 2022), and therefore judged as inauthentic. But what if they are outwardly passionate about their luxury

consumption? Will others perceive them as being more authentic?

Passion refers to intense positive feelings toward a valued preference (Jachimowicz et al., 2019). It transcends mere liking and is characterized by high energy (Jachimowicz et al., 2019) and high-arousal feelings, such as delight, infatuation, and excitement (Albert et al., 2013; Thomson et al., 2005). Consumers can be passionate about brands, and this passion increases their desire to use products from these brands, invest resources into them, and seek out up-to-date information about them (Baldus et al., 2015; Batra et al., 2012; Thomson et al., 2005; Wong, 2023).

In a series of pilot studies, we found that most luxury consumers are indeed passionate about luxury products or brands (see Table 1 and Pilot Studies 1 and 2 in

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the Methodological Details Appendix [MDA]). And yet many refrain from revealing this passion to others (Pilot Studies 1, 3a, 3b), particularly to those less close to them, such as their co-workers and social media followers (Pilot Study 2). This is because they worry about receiving negative judgments (e.g., “I wouldn't want them to get the impression that I'm some sort of snob.”; Pilot Studies 2, 3a, 3b).

Contrary to luxury consumers' reluctance to share their passion for luxury, we propose that those who publicly express such passion will be perceived by others to be more *authentic*—that is, acting in accordance with their true selves (Gershon & Smith, 2020)—than those who do not. This is because observers tend to attribute luxury consumption to extrinsic motives, inferring that the person is consuming luxury instrumentally to obtain external benefits, such as status, social approval, and favorable impressions (Cannon & Rucker, 2019; Ho et al., 2023). We theorize that expressing passion for luxury shifts this inference, leading observers to attribute the person's luxury consumption more strongly to intrinsic (rather than extrinsic) motivation. That is, a consumer who expresses passion for luxury will be seen as pursuing the enjoyment and stimulation inherent in the usage of luxury products (e.g., pleasure derived from craftsmanship; Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2019; Van Boven et al., 2010), rather than consuming for ulterior reasons, such as gaining status and impressing others. In turn, this shift in attribution from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation will cause the luxury consumer to be perceived as being more authentic. Unlike luxury consumption,

non-luxury consumption is, in general, not readily associated with ulterior motives, such as status enhancement or impression management (Cannon & Rucker, 2019). As such, when observing non-luxury consumption, people are generally unlikely to infer extrinsic motives, and therefore the positive effect of passion expression will likely be muted.

We further propose that elevated perceptions of authenticity will, in turn, produce several positive interpersonal outcomes for luxury consumers. First, greater perceived authenticity will correspondingly bolster the *perceived warmth* of luxury consumers. Increased perceptions of authenticity tend to make one seem warmer (Cheshin et al., 2018; Grandey et al., 2005), whereas being seen as misrepresenting one's true self reduces perceived friendliness and kindness (Samper et al., 2018). This is because people infer warmth from the perceived intentions or motives of others (Fiske et al., 2007), and an authentic individual with no hidden or suspicious intent is assumed to be benign and thus seen as warm (Berger & Barasch, 2018; Tang et al., 2022). Second, heightened perceptions of authenticity will enhance the *perceived trustworthiness* of luxury consumers. Authentic individuals are viewed as lacking ulterior motives and less likely to deceive others and conceal their true feelings. As a result, observers feel less defensive toward authentic individuals and perceive them as more trustworthy (Cheshin et al., 2018; Kim & Kim, 2021; Wickham, 2013). Third, we turn to a behavioral consequence of enhanced perceived authenticity, examining whether it will prompt observers to demonstrate greater *interest in knowing more about the luxury*

TABLE 1 Summary of pilot studies.

Pilot study	Description of online sample	Study design	Key findings
1	200 high-income luxury consumers	Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61.0% of participants indicated that they were passionate about a luxury product or brand that they currently owned and used 47.5% of participants indicated that they would not tell others about their passion for a luxury product and/or brand, even if they were passionate about it
2	195 high-income luxury consumers	Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 69.7% of participants indicated that they felt passionate about a luxury brand Passionate luxury consumers ($N=116$) were more likely to refrain from expressing their passion for luxury to their co-workers (59.5%), acquaintances (52.6%), and social media followers (56.9%) compared to their family members (12.9%) and friends (7.8%), believing that they would be judged negatively (e.g., “braggy” and “pretentious”) by people who are less close to them
3a	199 high-income luxury consumers	2-cell between-subjects design (luxury vs. non-luxury)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants were less likely to reveal their passion for luxury (vs. non-luxury) sneakers to the co-worker Participants in the luxury (vs. non-luxury) condition were more likely to mention concerns about others' negative evaluations in revealing their passion (e.g., “I wouldn't want them to get the impression that I'm some sort of snob.”)
3b	160 regular workers	Participants imagined being passionate about luxury (vs. non-luxury) sneakers and being complimented by a co-worker about their Gucci (vs. Converse) sneakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Such concerns discouraged participants from expressing their passion for luxury (vs. non-luxury) sneakers

consumer. Disclosing a genuine, unvarnished self and not having hidden motives is highly valued in interpersonal relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Greene et al., 2006), and people show a strong desire to get to know individuals who appear authentic (Berger & Barasch, 2018). We present our conceptual model in Figure 1.

EXPERIMENT 1

Experiment 1 aims to provide initial evidence that expressing passion for luxury (vs. not) makes luxury consumers appear more authentic and thus warmer. Further, we investigate whether expressing passion for luxury enhances perceived authenticity *without* compromising the status benefits of luxury consumption. Specifically, we test whether luxury consumers who express passion for luxury are conferred higher status than non-luxury consumers and equal status as luxury consumers who do not express passion for luxury. To test this, we include a non-luxury condition as a benchmark comparison.

Method

We report all materials, data exclusions, and ancillary analyses from all our studies in the MDA. In this preregistered experiment (<https://aspredicted.org/xx832.pdf>), we randomly assigned US-based Prolific participants (final $N=300$; $M_{age}=32.79$, $SD=11.38$; 48.3% female, 1.7% other gender) to one of three between-subjects conditions (non-luxury vs. luxury vs. luxury-plus-passion). Participants in the non-luxury (vs. luxury) condition read about conversing with a co-worker: “During the conversation, you notice and compliment his Converse (vs. Gucci) sneakers. It’s clear from your previous observations that he owns several sneakers (vs. luxury sneakers) from various brands (vs. high-end brands), such as Converse, Vans, and Puma (vs. Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Balenciaga).” Participants in the luxury-plus-passion condition read the same vignette from the luxury condition followed by these two sentences: “He reveals that he

is passionate about luxury sneakers. He follows sneaker enthusiasts on social media and reads up on the latest designer sneakers in the market.”

Participants then indicated their perceptions of the co-worker’s authenticity, warmth, and status. We measured perceived authenticity using three items (authentic, sincere, and genuine; $\alpha=0.94$) (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Very*; Gershon & Smith, 2020), perceived warmth using five items (sociable, helpful, warm, good-natured, and friendly; $\alpha=0.92$) (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Extremely*; Gaertig et al., 2019), and perceived status using three items (e.g., “How would you rank the social status of the co-worker?”; $\alpha=0.88$) (1 = *Low social status*, 7 = *High social status*; Bellezza et al., 2017). We randomized the order of the measures (see MDA for discriminant validity tests). Finally, as a manipulation check, participants rated the co-worker’s passion: “The co-worker is passionate about (luxury) sneakers” (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*).

Results

Perceived passion (manipulation check)

Perceived passion differed significantly across conditions, $F(2, 297)=50.20$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.25$. The co-worker was perceived as more passionate in the luxury-plus-passion condition ($M=6.69$, $SD=0.61$) than in the non-luxury condition ($M=5.42$, $SD=1.29$), $F(1, 297)=90.26$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.23$, and in the luxury condition ($M=6.43$, $SD=0.79$), $F(1, 297)=3.97$, $p=0.047$, $\eta_p^2=0.01$. Interestingly, the latter two conditions also differed, $F(1, 297)=56.79$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.16$, and we explore the implications of this in the “General Discussion” section.

Perceived authenticity

Perceived authenticity differed significantly across conditions, $F(2, 297)=13.77$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.08$ (see Figure 2). The co-worker was perceived as less authentic in the luxury condition ($M=4.02$, $SD=0.97$) than in the non-luxury

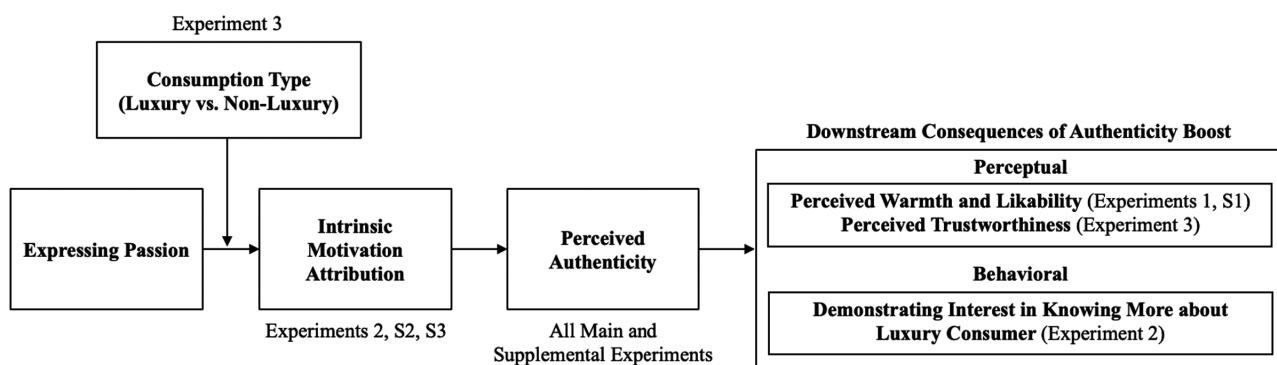


FIGURE 1 Conceptual model with associated experiments.

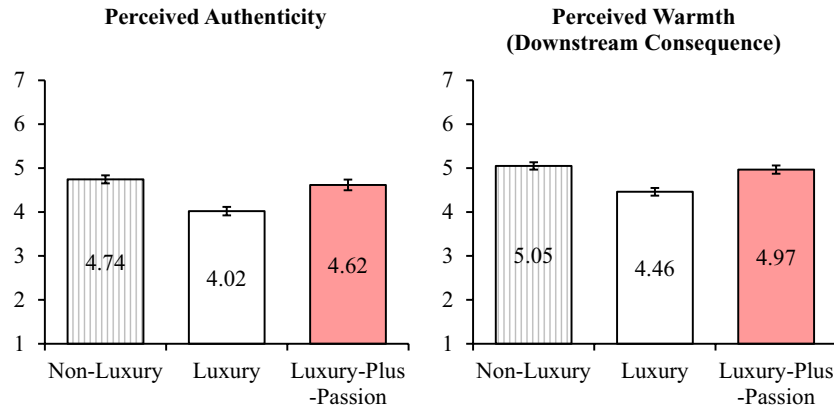


FIGURE 2 Perceptions of authenticity and warmth across conditions (Experiment 1). *Note:* Error bars represent standard errors.

condition ($M=4.74$, $SD=0.92$), $F(1, 297)=24.06$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.07$. Crucially, expressing passion for luxury mitigated this difference: the co-worker was seen as more authentic in the luxury-plus-passion condition ($M=4.62$, $SD=1.22$) than in the luxury condition ($M=4.02$, $SD=1.22$), $F(1, 297)=16.42$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.05$. The luxury-plus-passion and non-luxury conditions did not differ, $F(1, 297)=0.74$, $p=0.39$.

Perceived warmth (downstream consequence)

Perceived warmth differed significantly across conditions, $F(2, 297)=13.11$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.08$ (see [Figure 2](#)). The co-worker was perceived as less warm in the luxury condition ($M=4.46$, $SD=0.88$) than in the non-luxury condition ($M=5.05$, $SD=0.83$), $F(1, 297)=22.34$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.07$. Expressing passion for luxury attenuated this warmth penalty: the co-worker was seen as warmer in the luxury-plus-passion condition ($M=4.97$, $SD=0.93$) than in the luxury condition, $F(1, 297)=16.47$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.05$. The luxury-plus-passion and non-luxury conditions did not differ, $F(1, 297)=0.46$, $p=0.50$.

Mediation

Using PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2018; all mediation analyses using the PROCESS macro were conducted with 10,000 bootstrapped samples), we found that perceived authenticity mediated the effect of luxury-plus-passion (vs. luxury) on perceived warmth, $B=0.31$, $SE=0.08$, 95% $CI=[0.1505, 0.4844]$.

Perceived status

Perceived status differed significantly across conditions, $F(2, 297)=34.74$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.19$. The co-worker was conferred higher status in the luxury condition ($M=5.40$, $SD=0.98$) than in the non-luxury condition ($M=4.34$, $SD=0.74$), $F(1, 297)=60.43$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.17$. Luxury

passion expression did not change this difference: the co-worker was still conferred higher status in the luxury-plus-passion condition ($M=5.23$, $SD=1.12$) than in the non-luxury condition, $F(1, 297)=42.44$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.13$. The luxury-plus-passion and luxury conditions did not differ, $F(1, 297)=1.55$, $p=0.21$.

Discussion

Experiment 1 shows that expressing passion for luxury mitigates the social costs of luxury consumption without compromising status perceptions. Replicating past research (Cannon & Rucker, 2019; McFerran et al., 2014), we found that the luxury consumer was perceived as less warm than the non-luxury consumer. However, passion expression made the luxury consumer appear more authentic and therefore warmer. We replicate these results in Experiment S1 (see [MDA](#)) using a different product (i.e., a watch) and a closely related downstream consequence (i.e., likability; Fiske et al., 2007).

EXPERIMENT 2

Experiment 2 probes the underlying process, testing whether the effect of luxury passion expression on perceived authenticity is mediated by intrinsic motivation attribution. Moreover, we explore a behavioral downstream consequence of enhanced authenticity perceptions. People desire to get to know individuals who appear authentic (Berger & Barasch, 2018). Building on these past findings, we test whether observers demonstrate greater interest in knowing more about a luxury consumer when she expresses her passion for luxury (vs. does not).

Method

We randomly assigned US-based Prolific participants (final $N=838$; $M_{age}=38.03$, $SD=14.18$; 62.3% female, 1.6%

other gender) to either a luxury passion expression or control condition. The study comprised two parts. In Part 1, participants read a news article about what comedians wear when performing stand-up (see MDA for complete stimuli). The article stated that the focal comedian, [X], wears “an exclusive \$522 t-shirt from Kiton” when she performs. In the luxury passion expression (vs. control) condition, comedian [X] bought the t-shirt “because she's deeply passionate about Kiton. She closely follows the brand's creative director on social media and reads up on the latest news and developments about the brand.” (vs. “because she saw it in Kiton's most recent ad on social media and thought it looked good. She is active on social media and reads up on the latest news and trends.”) To strengthen the manipulation, we asked participants to explain in a free-response format why comedian [X] bought the Kiton t-shirt according to the news article.

Then participants rated comedian [X] on perceived authenticity using the three items ($\alpha=0.97$) from Experiment 1. They also rated how much the comedian wore the Kiton t-shirt because of the intrinsic rewards (such as personal enjoyment that the t-shirt would provide), rather than the extrinsic rewards (such as status and prestige) (1 = *Primarily extrinsic rewards*, 7 = *Primarily intrinsic rewards*; Van Boven et al., 2010).

Next, participants proceeded to Part 2 of the study in which they would presumably watch a video. They were given two video options to choose from. One option was to watch a video where they would get to know more about comedian [X]; the other option was to watch a video where they would get to know more about another comedian (i.e., Laura Daniel who was mentioned in the news article). The choice of comedian [X]'s video served as a behavioral measure of interest in knowing more about the luxury consumer. Participants subsequently rated comedian [X]'s passion for Kiton (1 = *Not at all passionate*, 7 = *Extremely passionate*).

Results

Manipulation check

Comedian [X] was perceived as more passionate about the luxury brand in the luxury passion expression condition ($M=6.31$, $SD=1.04$) than in the control condition ($M=4.18$, $SD=1.51$), $F(1, 836)=562.61$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.40$ (see MDA for luxury manipulation check).

Main analyses

Comedian [X] was perceived as more authentic when she expressed her passion for the luxury brand ($M=4.49$, $SD=1.35$) than when she did not ($M=3.90$, $SD=1.45$), $F(1, 836)=37.65$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.04$. Moreover, her consumption of the luxury t-shirt was viewed as more

intrinsically motivated in the luxury passion expression condition ($M=4.23$, $SD=1.66$) than in the control condition ($M=3.50$, $SD=1.80$), $F(1, 836)=37.10$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.04$. Finally, participants were more likely to choose comedian [X]'s video in the luxury passion expression condition (77.9%) than in the control condition (72.0%), $B=0.32$, $SE=0.16$, Wald $\chi^2=3.96$, $p=0.047$, $OR=1.38$.

Serial mediation

Using PROCESS Model 6 (Hayes, 2018), we tested for serial mediation (luxury passion expression → intrinsic motivation attribution → perceived authenticity → interest in knowing more about the luxury consumer). The indirect effect for this serial mediation path was significant, $B=0.05$, $SE=0.02$, 95% CI=[0.0205, 0.0942].

Discussion

Experiment 2 shows that expressing passion for luxury enhances perceived authenticity and, as a downstream consequence, observers exhibit greater interest in knowing more about the luxury consumer. This occurs because passion expression makes the luxury consumption appear more intrinsically motivated. We replicate the mediating role of intrinsic motivation attribution in Experiments S2 and S3 (see MDA) using different luxury products and different manipulations of passion expression.

EXPERIMENT 3

Experiment 3 examines whether the focal effect is specific to expressing passion for luxury or an effect of expressing passion in general. We predicted that passion expression would enhance perceived authenticity, and thus trustworthiness, when directed at luxury consumption but not non-luxury consumption. This prediction dovetails with our theorizing that observers tend to attribute luxury consumption to extrinsic motives, whereas expressing passion for luxury mitigates this tendency by shifting observers' attribution toward intrinsic motivation (e.g., consuming luxury for inherent pleasure). Unlike luxury consumption, non-luxury consumption is, in general, unlikely to elicit thoughts about extrinsic motives, and therefore the benefits of passion expression are likely to be attenuated. Experiment 3 further tests whether expressing passion for luxury preserves the status benefits of luxury consumption.

Method

This study used a 2 (passion expression vs. control) × 2 (luxury vs. non-luxury) between-subjects design.

Participants (final $N=801$ US-based Prolific participants; $M_{\text{age}}=36.00$, $SD=12.71$; 44.1% female, 2.5% other gender) read a vignette about a co-worker's new car. Participants in the non-luxury (vs. luxury) condition read that the car (vs. luxury car) is “very affordable and readily available” (vs. “very expensive and exclusive”). In the passion expression (vs. control) condition, the co-worker “notes that he is passionate about (vs. satisfied with) the car model” and “describes what he is passionate about (vs. satisfied with) such as the car model's engineering and design.”

Then participants rated the co-worker's perceived authenticity, trustworthiness, and status. We used nearly identical measures of perceived authenticity ($\alpha=0.95$) and perceived status ($\alpha=0.94$) from Experiment 1. We measured perceived trustworthiness using three items ($\alpha=0.81$) on 7-point scales (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Very*): honest, trustworthy, and unreliable (reverse-scored; Côté et al., 2013). Finally, participants rated the co-worker's passion for the car model (1 = *Not at all passionate*, 7 = *Extremely passionate*).

Results

Perceived passion (manipulation check)

A 2 (passion expression vs. control) \times 2 (luxury vs. non-luxury) ANOVA on perceived passion revealed a significant main effect of passion expression, $F(1, 797)=320.22$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.29$. As intended, the co-worker was perceived as more passionate in the passion expression condition ($M=6.40$, $SD=0.85$) than in the control condition ($M=5.23$, $SD=1.01$). The main effect of car type was also significant, $F(1, 797)=4.34$, $p=0.037$, $\eta_p^2=0.01$, but the passion expression \times car type interaction was not significant, $F(1, 797)=0.02$, $p=0.88$. To assess the relative impact of each factor, we analyzed their effect sizes (Perdue & Summers, 1986). The effect size of the passion expression manipulation ($\eta_p^2=0.2866$) was about 53 times bigger than that of the car type manipulation ($\eta_p^2=0.0054$), suggesting that our passion expression manipulation was successful.

Perceived authenticity

A two-way ANOVA on perceived authenticity revealed a significant passion expression \times car type interaction, $F(1, 797)=8.69$, $p=0.003$, $\eta_p^2=0.01$. Planned contrasts showed that passion expression (vs. control) made the co-worker appear more authentic in the luxury condition ($M_{\text{passion expression}}=5.21$, $SD=1.10$ vs. $M_{\text{control}}=4.83$, $SD=1.00$), $F(1, 797)=14.41$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.02$. This effect was attenuated in the non-luxury condition ($M_{\text{passion expression}}=5.64$, $SD=0.93$ vs. $M_{\text{control}}=5.68$, $SD=0.95$), $F(1, 797)=0.14$, $p=0.71$ (see Figure 3).

Perceived trustworthiness (downstream consequence)

A two-way ANOVA on perceived trustworthiness revealed a significant interaction, $F(1, 797)=5.11$, $p=0.024$, $\eta_p^2=0.01$. In the luxury condition, the co-worker was perceived as marginally more trustworthy when he expressed passion (vs. control) ($M_{\text{passion expression}}=5.05$, $SD=1.03$ vs. $M_{\text{control}}=4.87$, $SD=0.92$), $F(1, 797)=3.66$, $p=0.056$, $\eta_p^2=0.005$. In the non-luxury condition, this effect was attenuated ($M_{\text{passion expression}}=5.58$, $SD=0.91$ vs. $M_{\text{control}}=5.70$, $SD=0.98$), $F(1, 797)=1.65$, $p=0.20$ (see Figure 3).

Moderated mediation

Using PROCESS Model 8 (Hayes, 2018), we ran a moderated mediation analysis with passion expression as the independent variable, perceived authenticity as the mediator, car type as the moderator, and perceived trustworthiness as the dependent variable. The moderated mediation was significant, $B=0.28$, $SE=0.10$, 95% $CI=[0.0918, 0.4694]$. Perceived authenticity mediated the effect of passion expression on perceived trustworthiness in the luxury condition, $B=0.25$, $SE=0.07$, 95% $CI=[0.1172, 0.3969]$. This indirect effect was attenuated in the non-luxury condition, $B=-0.03$, $SE=0.06$, 95% $CI=[-0.1506, 0.1012]$.

Perceived status

A two-way ANOVA on perceived status revealed only a significant main effect of car type, $F(1, 797)=540.40$, $p<0.001$, $\eta_p^2=0.40$. As expected, the co-worker was conferred higher status in the luxury condition ($M=5.66$, $SD=0.91$) than in the non-luxury condition ($M=4.17$, $SD=0.89$). Neither the main effect of passion expression, $F(1, 797)=0.01$, $p=0.91$, nor the interaction was significant, $F(1, 797)=0.04$, $p=0.85$.

Discussion

Experiment 3 shows that expressing passion for luxury enhances perceived authenticity and thus increases perceived trustworthiness, while still allowing the luxury consumer to enjoy greater status conferral. Importantly, we found that these benefits of passion expression were unique to the luxury car and did not occur for the non-luxury car, consistent with the idea that, in general, people tend to attribute luxury consumption (but not non-luxury consumption) to extrinsic motives, and passion expression alleviates these negative inferences.

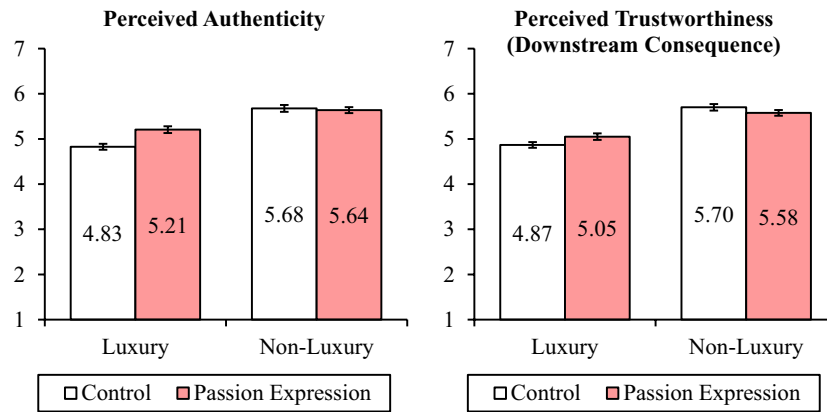


FIGURE 3 Perceptions of authenticity and trustworthiness across conditions (Experiment 3). Note: Error bars represent standard errors.

TABLE 2 Limitations of current research and directions for future research.

Limitations of current research	Questions and directions for future research
Our experiments examined the effects of passion expression only in the context of <i>conspicuous</i> luxury consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the benefits of passion expression be attenuated for certain types of luxury consumption where observers are less likely to infer extrinsic motives for consuming luxury (e.g., flaunting wealth and signaling status to others)—for instance, when the target person is consuming inconspicuous (vs. conspicuous) luxury items that are quiet and discreet (Berger & Ward, 2010; Han et al., 2010)?
Apart from Experiments 1, 3, and S1, we manipulated luxury passion expression using a <i>third-person description</i> in Experiments 2, S2, and S3. In other words, the luxury consumer was described by a third-party source (e.g., a vignette, a news article) as being passionate about luxury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the effects hold when people directly observe the luxury consumer's expression of passion for luxury (without a third-party source describing the consumer as being passionate about luxury)? Will direct observers interpret luxury passion expression as disingenuous (i.e., a form of bragging)? If so, under what circumstances will they form such an interpretation, and will the positive effects of luxury passion expression be weakened?
Our experiments did not examine situations where the luxury consumer is passionate about a luxury product or brand <i>for its status-signaling value</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the positive effects of passion expression be attenuated when the luxury consumer expresses passion toward a luxury product or brand for status-related reasons (e.g., because it can impress others)?
Our experiments did not examine the <i>intensity</i> of luxury passion expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will expressing too much passion for luxury backfire by making the luxury consumer seem obsessive?
Our experiments did not examine specific contexts where the positive effects of passion expression may also occur for <i>non-luxury</i> consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If non-luxury consumption is associated with ulterior motives (e.g., consuming non-luxury fad items to fit in and gain social approval), will passion expression similarly restore authenticity perceptions and thus lead to positive interpersonal outcomes?
Like in previous research on passion, we did not examine how observers may perceive the <i>intentions</i> behind the target person's passion expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When will the target person's passion expression be interpreted by observers as believable (i.e., a true manifestation of one's passion) versus fake (i.e., driven by ulterior motives)?
Our experiments only examined <i>consumption-related</i> behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will passion expression produce similar benefits when applied to other types of impression management behaviors where extrinsic motives are salient, such as humblebragging about one's professional achievement (Sezer et al., 2018) and engaging in conspicuous giving (Yang & Hsee, 2022)?

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Our research documents expressing passion for luxury as a novel pathway via which the social costs imposed on luxury consumers can be mitigated. The effects emerged across various forms of passion expression derived from the literature (Baldus et al., 2015; Batra et al., 2012; Wong, 2023) and Pilot Study 2 (see MDA), such as closely following the luxury brand on social media, learning about the brand, and displaying admiration for its

products (see MDA for summary table of forms of passion expression used across experiments).

We surmise that passion for luxury needs to be *expressed* for the authenticity boost to occur. Manipulation checks from our data (Experiments 1, 3, and S1) indicate that within the no-passion-expression conditions, the luxury consumers were perceived as more passionate than the non-luxury consumers. This is likely because participants inferred from their willingness to spend more on luxury (vs. non-luxury) that

they may be somewhat passionate about luxury—we term this *inferred passion*. However, we found that inferred passion did not translate into heightened perceived authenticity, likely because it is an ambiguous signal of intrinsic motivation. By contrast, when a luxury consumer's passion is *expressed* (rather than merely inferred), it becomes certain and clear to observers that the consumption is intrinsically motivated—that is, the consumer is seen as pursuing the pleasure inherent in consuming luxury rather than pursuing the external benefits of luxury, such as status (as shown in Experiments 2, S2, and S3). This clear signal conveyed by *expressed passion* is likely what enhances perceived authenticity and alleviates the social costs of luxury consumption.

This research makes several theoretical and practical contributions. Although luxury consumers are conferred higher status, they are often judged as inauthentic because they are seen as impression-managing and self-promotional (Cannon & Rucker, 2019; Ho et al., 2023; Srna et al., 2022). We show that luxury passion expression restores perceived authenticity and thus leads to positive interpersonal outcomes (e.g., higher warmth perceptions) without undermining the status benefits of luxury consumption. Our findings also contribute to emerging research on passion expression. Expressing passion for work can increase perceived status (Jachimowicz et al., 2019) and competence (Wolf et al., 2016). Applying passion to a different domain, we show that expressing passion for luxury consumption can enhance perceptions of authenticity (and thus warmth and trustworthiness). However, we found no effect of luxury passion expression on perceived status and inconsistent effects on perceived competence (note that we measured perceived competence in Experiments 1 and S1; see MDA for ancillary analyses regarding perceived competence). Therefore, the impact of passion expression on social judgments may depend on what the expresser is passionate about (e.g., work vs. luxury). Our findings also offer practical insights. For instance, luxury brands should encourage their customers to express their passion for their brands and provide the means for them to do so, such as nudging customers to share or like certain content on social media that conveys passion for the brand.

The current research has several limitations which provide opportunities for future research. For example, the effects of passion expression may be attenuated for inconspicuous (vs. conspicuous) luxury consumption where extrinsic motives are less salient. Another avenue worth investigating is whether passion expression generates similar benefits when applied to other types of impression management behaviors where extrinsic motives are salient, such as humblebragging about one's professional achievement (Sezer et al., 2018) and engaging in conspicuous giving (Yang & Hsee, 2022).

We outline these potential directions in Table 2 to stimulate future research on passion expression and luxury consumption.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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