

# 'Feel good' factor higher when you own, not just use, luxury items

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It means more to people to own a luxury product or brand than to have the privilege of simply using one. Just using an affordable luxury item you don't own can, in fact, dampen the feel good factor that normally surrounds such products, say Liselot Hudders and Mario Pandelaere of Ghent University in Belgium. The research was published in Springer's journal *Applied Research in Quality of Life*.

To test the link between [luxury](#) consumption and subjective well-being, the researchers presented 307 [study participants](#) with luxury and ordinary versions of either a durable pen, or a consumable block of

chocolate. One group of respondents knew they could take the chocolate or pen home with them, while the other only had the opportunity to test or taste it. All the [participants](#) evaluated the products on a number of dimensions, including quality, exclusivity and luxuriance, and also answered a questionnaire about their own sense of well-being.

Pens and chocolates were selected because they are almost equally appealing to people in the sample, which consisted of mostly young people. These items were chosen also because their luxury versions are not overly expensive. More frugal consumers are generally willing to pay premiums for well-designed, well-engineered and well-crafted moderate [luxury goods](#), which are – unlike very high-end luxuries such as sports cars and yachts – produced in high volumes.

The respondents who were able to keep the luxury versions of the products they tested were more satisfied with life than the participants who received the low-budget versions. On the other hand, the well-being of participants who could not keep the luxury versions they evaluated was significantly lower than that of respondents who evaluated the plain versions. Another interesting finding from the non-ownership category is that these participants were significantly more satisfied with their life after using the chocolate than after using the pen.

"The finding that people are more satisfied with life when they own luxury products than when they only get to use them is in line with prior research that equates consumption with ownership," says Hudders. "In contrast, the mere use or mere knowledge of luxury products seems to be detrimental for one's satisfaction with [life](#)."

**More information:** Hudders, L. & Pandelaere, M. (2014). Is Having a Taste of Luxury a Good Idea? How Use vs. Ownership of Luxury Products Affects Satisfaction with Life, *Applied Research in Quality of Life*. [DOI: 10.1007/s11482-014-9310-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-014-9310-x)

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