NEED FOR STATUS: SCALE DEVELOPMENT FOR AN INDIVIDUAL TRAIT IN THE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CONTEXT

By

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ABSTRACT

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One of the primary needs in the field of advertising and consumer behavior is the measurement of "need for status" (NfS). Status-seeking is a driver that leads individuals to seek to possess and display the items and emblems that make them feel and appear that they belong in higher strata within their social group (Bellezza et al., 2013). Even though status motive has been proposed as a critical factor in luxury marketing and branding studies, there is no established scale and operational definition of what NfS represents. This study aims to bridge the gap by creating and testing a two-part scale for the NfS, designed particularly to apply to the context of consumer behavior.

The problem with existing scales used to measure NfS is that they either lack content validity, or they fail to measure all facets of the construct. For instance, some refer to status consumption, which is a behavioral tendency, interchangeably with the NfS, which is an internal motive (Eastman & Eastman, 2015). Others treat NfS as a unidimensional construct (Dubois et al., 2012) that does not address whether the status motive has different dimensions. The current study introduces a new scale for NfS, a scale that can be used by advertising and marketing scholars as a tool to be utilized, as one develops persuasive status-appeal messages. In addition, the status motive has been suggested as a cause for conspicuous spending on luxury products, as well as prosocial spending. However, no explanation is given regarding when each outcome is more likely.

To create a scale for NfS, this study will follow the steps developed by researchers in marketing (Churchill, 1979), psychology (Clark & Watson, 1995), and communication studies (Carpenter, 2018) to construct a scale that is theoretically sound and methodologically valid. The study will also adhere to best practices in psychometric research, particularly factor analysis and construct validation, as prescribed in some foundational sources (Kline, 2014; Osborne et al., 2008). All these steps will be thoroughly explained in the method section.

The results of the study have revealed two primary findings. First, the NfS has two main dimensions: *exclusiveness* and *respectability*. Second, I found that each is a reliable predictor of two contrasting outcomes: exclusiveness predicts intention and frequency of luxury spending, and respectability predicts charitable intentions and frequency of giving. All the necessary steps of testing reliability and validity for new scales have been conducted. The contribution of this scale for future research on luxury consumption, as well as prosocial spending, will be further discussed in the conclusion section.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1: Why study the need for status?

Personality traits are critical antecedents of processes like status motivation because understanding individual differences among audience members informs the design and execution of messaging appeals. Differences in personality traits affect the social perception process and the level of compliance with persuasion messages. For instance, media involvement increases when the need to belong is high among the audience (Greenwood & Long, 2009). Communicators can strategically alter a messaging appeal to match the intended audience's personality dimensions by having different messaging appeals that emphasize the most relevant needs for each audience group (Cacioppo et al., 1983; Noar et al., 2007).

Scholars have studied many personality traits that can predict conspicuous consumption. For example, having materialist values, defined as the extent to which people admire those with money and find their value in material possessions, has been proposed as an explanatory factor (Richins & Dawson, 1992). When people find value in what they own and consider owning expensive things a sign of their success, they are likely to have a high tendency to purchase more luxury brands and be susceptible to messages that invoke conspicuous consumption (Shrum et al., 2013). A tendency toward status-seeking has also been proposed as a predictor. When people want to enhance their status within a given context, they seek items that are conventionally understood to be indicators of social status (Eastman et al., 1997). The question is, what makes people care about status in the first place?

Researchers in the social sciences have long understood status and reputation as important motives for human behavior. Nonetheless, there is an established need for status (NfS) scale that is agreed upon for all disciplines. In recent years, many researchers have suggested that the NfS can predict a wide array of actions, such as luxury spending (Han et al., 2010), inconspicuous consumption (Berger & Ward, 2010), avoiding counterfeit products (Geiger-Oneto et al., 2013), charitable giving (Croson et al., 2009), conservationist behavior (Elliott, 2013), and healthy eating (Puska et al., 2018). However, there is a missing link between how the status motive can both predict conspicuous behavior and altruistic behavior. The existing scale only points to the general motivation to achieve higher status, but it does not explain what social status mean at the conceptual level. These suggestions indicate a need to explicate the meaning of the social-status drive and how it relates to consumer behavior and messaging effects. This project was designed to create a need-for-status scale that can be used to capture the different levels of status-seeking and the predicted outcomes of high status-seeking. I outline the major steps of the project in the following chapters.

Table 1.1: Steps for scale development

Step	Description
Construct definition and conceptual development	Conduct a thorough literature review; establish the conceptual and operational definitions; identify the boundaries and scope of the scale
Qualitative research	Conduct in-depth interviews or focus groups; analyze the major themes in the interviews; extract the main dimensions
Item generation	Create a bank of items related to the construct's dimensions; seek experts' feedback; pilot-test items
Reliability testing	Conduct a large-scale survey of the items; conduct an exploratory factor analysis; purify the items and normalize consistency
Validity testing	Conduct a second survey; conduct and confirmatory factor analysis; test the relationships between the construct and other related factors; establish content and predictive validity; build a nomological network

This dissertation created and then tested the performance of an NfS scale, and then used that scale to predict behavior in an experiment regarding donation behavior. The plan for scale development follows the models of Carpenter (2018), Churchill (1979), and DeVellis (2016), and involves six major steps (see Table 1.1).

1.2: The current project

In the beginning of this effort, I first conducted an extensive literature review of research on status signaling and status consumption. Following that, I conducted seven in-depth interviews with college students about aspects of *NfS*. It emerged from these interviews that NfS can mean two things: (1) being recognized as a member of an elite or exclusive group (being associated with high-status individuals); and (2) being recognized for one's unique qualities and value by surrounding others. I call these dimensions *need for exclusivity* and *need for recognition*, respectively. I tested these dimensions in a pilot survey and two major surveys. These dimensions can be compared to the antecedents to luxury consumption first proposed by Leibenstein (1950), which he called *snob appeal* (appeal of rare items), the *Veblen effect* (appeal of expensive items), and the *bandwagon effect* (appeal of popular items). The snob and Veblen appeal would be more applicable to the practice of status consumption, while the bandwagon effect is linked to the consumption of mainstream and popular items. Therefore, major conceptual differences exist between how Leibenstein defined these antecedents of status consumption and how they were defined, in comparison how the current study defines the need for status as a factor in consumer behavior. These key differences, and others, will be further discussed in the literature review chapter.

The major concern of this study is not status consumption per se; rather, it is about the status drive—our internal motivation to seek respect and respectability by others and to secure a special place for ourselves in our unique communities. To elaborate on these points, in the rest of this dissertation, I first review the relevant literature on NfS as it relates to luxury consumption and prosocial spending. Next, I conducted an extensive literature review of research on status consumption, status-seeking, and NfS, exploring the marketing, advertising, and psychology literature. Based on this literature review, I then conducted qualitative research to further explore NfS as understood and conceived by members of the general public. I then used content analysis to uncover dimensions and propose scale items. At that point, I sought experts' feedback on the most appropriate dimensions and items for the proposed scale, to improve the wording and generalizability of the scale. The new items were then tested in a series of surveys conducted with online random samples. Finally, I conclude with the results of the two quantitative surveys conducted for exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, respectively.

This process produced a valid and reliable scale that can be used to predict how individuals' need for status affects the spending choices of consumers or donors. To that end, I tested a path model on the relationship between NfS and different behavioral and attitudinal outcomes, which will be explained in detail in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review led me to identify the missing dimensions of a complete theory of status-seeking and its role in serving as an antecedent to spending behavior.

2.1: Definition

Need for status is defined by Dubois et al. (2012) as a person's motive to attain respect or admiration by others. It is described as a fundamental human need, or motive, in the sense that it is universal and inherent due to evolutionary origins (Griskevicius & Kenrick, 2013). Social status can refer to how much social influence one has over others (Cheng et al., 2010) or the set of privileges high-ranking individuals gain within a community (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001).

The reason high status is considered an adaptive advantage is that it affords greater survival and reproduction opportunities, also known as fitness benefits (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Being respected and admired by others affords an individual more mating opportunities and access to material resources, which then result in better health and wellbeing and a higher number of offspring (Sapolsky, 2004). Hence, NfS is considered evolutionarily fundamental, even though it varies in terms of the domain(s) individuals are concerned with (e.g. economic status, professional status, political status). The strategies of status-seeking across societies and individuals (how to obtain status) and the manifestation of status signals across cultures (Cheng et al., 2010; Eastman & Liu, 2012).

In the current proposal, however, I am only referring to social status, which is sometimes referred to as *prestige.* Prestige is conferred respectability by surrounding others; the degree to which an individual is looked up to, respected, and queried for their opinions (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Wegener, 1992). Researchers have differentiated prestige from *dominance,* which refers to the power to compel and intimidate others into compliance and thus gain more privileges and resources for oneself (Cheng et al., 2013). In other words, dominance is more about physical or material power, in the form of having a more authoritative position, more intimidating tools, or more financial resources with which to gain influence. Hence, it does not require respectability by others, since others are compelled to comply with the dominant actor (Halevy et al., 2012). For this reason, I follow the suggestion by Anderson et al. (2015) that social status basically refers to prestige, whereas dominance can be considered a form of political status, organizational status, or economic status (Hays & Bendersky, 2015).

Conceptualizing social status as prestige is more relevant to consumer research since I am interested in the ways by which people can win others' admiration and respectability via their consumption or spending habits. Some other fields, such as organizational behavior, can be more focused on dominance as it is manifested in organizational rank or the material power each party possesses (Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989). On the other hand, if I am studying conspicuous consumption or prosocial signaling behavior, I am looking at activities associated with building prestige (Anderson et al., 2015; Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). Hence, the focus of this scale is solely applicable to the need for social status, and not to other forms of power or organizational rank.

The concept of need for status is derived from social psychology and evolutionary psychology, whereby a *need* refers to a psychological motive, an implicit desire that must be satisfied to preserve the psychological wellbeing of the individual (Chen et al., 2015) and increase his/her likelihood of passing on genes. Hence, a need here does not refer to a simple desire or a strategic goal. Rather, motives such as NfS or the need to belong drive other goals that people aspire to (Kenrick et al., 2010).

A certain level of social status is desired by all humans, but the ways social status is understood, and the level of status people find necessary to preserve their self-esteem and subjective wellbeing would vary across individuals, contexts, and cultures (Anderson et al., 2015). In that sense, NfS in a consumer-behavior context would be an individual-difference factor that varies in degree such that different results will appear in individual attitudes and sorts of behavior (Griskevicius & Kenrick, 2013). To summarize, then, NfS refers to the motives that relate to people's aspiration to become socially respected, treated favorably, and have others confer prestige upon them.

Evolutionary psychologists identified NfS as fundamental because it has fitness implications for other fundamental needs, such as mating and producing healthy offspring (Nelissen & Meijers, 2011; Sundie et al., 2011). Across societies, individuals with high prestige, especially men, would have better opportunities to start families and retain long-term relationships (Buss, 1994; Sundie et al., 2011). Men are therefore traditionally keener on status-seeking than women are, with prestige being a more important trait for male partners than physical attractiveness (Buss, 1989; Shackelford et al., 2005). Nonetheless, cultural changes in women's social rules and improved economic opportunities have led to women placing more value on prestige than men do (Hays, 2013).

Having explained the precise meaning of a *need* and why it is important to have a scale for them, the next step is to explain how NfS as a construct has evolved. The focus is tilted towards the consumer-behavior literature (although not exclusively) and from evolutionary psychology. These two lines of research can explain why the status drive became important to understanding advertising and marketing effects.

2.2: Need for status in consumer behavior

Human behavior is mainly driven by three things: individual traits and characteristics, ecological factors, and situational interactions between individual and ecological factors (Parkes, 1986). When scholars are interested in studying persuasion (attitude formation and change), they will likely study the circumstances that lead to behavioral or attitudinal changes (e.g., social pressure, material incentives, etc.) and the messages that affect people's attitudes, or they may examine the individual differences that make some people more inclined than others to adopt certain actions or accept specific messages (e.g., the effect of being extroverted on speaking skills; Brehm & Festinger, 1957). Based on that, NfS scale would be useful for advertising researchers who want to test different messages related to luxury products, conspicuous consumption, online donations, public volunteering, and so on.

Initially, NfS simply meant professional esteem, or how people viewed their job role (Porter, 1962). Job status, or how people perceive their jobs, is evaluated by others in terms of social prestige. Sociologists at the time developed scales to measure job prestige and indices that ranked how highly different professional roles are esteemed within a given society (Garbin & Bates, 1961; Holland, 1959).

In more recent decades, marketing researchers have started to pay attention to the role of social status in consumer behavior (Coleman, 1983), as income alone cannot explain people's consumption choices regarding things like luxury goods. Based on this thinking, some have argued that status motive ought to be introduced as a major factor (e.g. Chao & Schor, 1998).

Researchers of luxury products have proposed alternative explanations for consumers' motivation to pay premium prices for luxury goods, such as signaling wealth (conspicuousness), uniqueness, or conforming to prestige groups (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Consumers can buy and display luxury items to be perceived as wealthy, hence gaining influence, or indicating their dissociation from the masses and preference for exclusive belonging (Han et al., 2010). For consumers who wish to dissociate from low-prestige groups, luxury consumers will be motivated to seek items that are clear markers for high status.

Previous marketing research tried to understand the antecedents of conspicuous consumption (which is understood as a form of status signaling) but did not identify whether those antecedents represent one psychological construct. Only within the past decade have marketing and psychology research converged to explain the psychological motives that drive status signaling (Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). In other words, the need to be socially recognized and be considered “on top” could all be different facets of the internal drive for status. Synthesizing marketing research and evolutionary psychology research, I propose that luxury consumption is only one form of status-seeking, but NfS is actually a fundamental human drive that ought to be studied as a significant factor that affects the persuasion process.

2.3: The significance of studying need for status

We can conceptualize social status seeking as a motive that varies in intensity from one individual to another but is present in all people. Motive in this sense refers to an innate desire for a goal that satisfies one’s self-concept. Status-seeking can be considered a fundamental motive, rather than a niche desire or an anomaly, because it is not linked to a temporary want, but to long-term psychological wellbeing (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). A fundamental motive is an end goal, not a byproduct of another goal (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In addition to being linked to long-term wellbeing, a motive has to also stir or cause behavioral actions that seek to achieve its associated aim (McClelland et al., 1989). It should animate and direct people towards attaining, and maintaining, a minimum level of a desired goal, or even improving their situation (Anderson et al., 2015). This understanding of status motive is borrowed from evolutionary psychology theories that attributed our desire for status to the progression of forming social groups and wanting to have a favorable or advantageous position within our ancestral groups (Griskevicius & Kenrick, 2013).

To gain a more profound understanding of status-seeking consumer behavior, one has to grasp what the basic human motives are, how they relate to each other, and what explains the variance in people's actions when attempting to achieve motivational goals. Thus, I next explain how the model of basic needs can benefit the research on consumer behavior and advertising, particularly in relation to the status motive. After that, I describe what hypotheses I derived from my proposed model and how they were tested.

One question that must be answered is: if NfS is universal, how can it be measured among individuals? In other words, basic human needs should not vary from one individual to another if they are indeed necessary for a person's wellbeing and survival. The answer is that there is a distinction between a fundamental motive and the intensity of that motive within each individual. For instance, the desire for a pay raise or increase in income is purportedly universal, but the degree to which it is going to animate any given individual to work harder, build connections, and seek a raise would varies considerably.

Similarly, NfS can be a fundamental motive, such that people seek a certain level of respectability and unique position within their community, but the level to which each individual would feel that they need a higher status, or the extent to which their status-seeking would motivate or influence their plans and actions, would differ greatly (Anderson et al., 2015). Therefore, NfS can be treated as an individual-difference variable, or more precisely a personality trait, in which certain people would be high- or low-status seekers.

Recall that a fundamental need cannot be driven from another goal. Likewise, the desire for luxury products, for example, cannot be considered a motive, because fulfilling it does not directly achieve a wellbeing goal. Status-seeking, on the other hand, is an end goal or motive, aimed at producing enduring satisfaction rather than a temporary relief or gratification. However, people differ widely in terms of how satisfied they are with their current social status, how they define high status for themselves, and whether they consider social status a priority at their given stage of life.

These differences in intensity are what I refer to as NfS as a trait. If some people associate status with conspicuous spending, then they will differ from one another in terms of how concerned, and how motivated, they feel about buying status products (Eastman et al., 1999). Nonetheless, those who do not desire luxury products cannot be said to be unconcerned with status—they just have a different conception of status and different priorities that shape their behavior. This distinction is necessary to distinguish between certain manifestations of the status motive and NfS as an individual trait with different levels and scopes across individuals.

The contribution of understanding NfS as an evolved trait is that it changes our perception of conspicuous consumption, meaning that it is no longer seen as a simple reflection of acquiring wealth or as an outgrowth of consumer culture (Veblen, 1899). It is true that forms of conspicuous consumption are shaped by the cultural values dominant in society, and an individual's level of materialistic value and economic class (Fitzmaurice & Comegys, 2006; Gao et al., 2016). The need for social status, however, is fundamental to all human societies, regardless of whether it is related to the consumption of luxury brands.

One shortcoming of previous theoretical models is that they equated status consumption, which is one process by which to fulfill NfS, with a motive that is an antecedent to status-seeking behavior (Eastman & Eastman, 2015). NfS refers to an individual's motive to attain an exclusive position within their social circle and gain social prestige and respectability in the eyes of others (Dubois et al., 2012; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001).

Of course, material goods or luxury items can be tools for gaining prestige (i.e., being admired and having influence or respectability), but there are other forms of behavior that can also be about status-seeking. Previous research has pointed to eco-friendly consumption (Griskevicius et al., 2010), charitable behavior (Schlosser & Levy, 2016), and online sharing behavior (Park et al., 2017) as examples. Research has shown that NfS can motivate people to increase knowledge sharing online (Park et al., 2017) or to choose eco-friendly products over luxury products (Griskevicius et al., 2010). But for decades, research has also shown a strong correlation between status motive and conspicuous consumption of luxury products (Eastman & Eastman, 2015).

This raises the question: how could prosocial and selfish forms of behavior be both outcomes of the same motive? My solution to this contradiction is threefold: I considered the context of status comparison, individual differences in materialistic values, and the multidimensionality of the status motive as factors that determine status-seeking behavior. These individual differences can be attributed to situational differences (i.e. different contexts that activate different needs; Anderson et al., 2012), cultural norms and value systems (Han et al., 2017), and personality variables (Kauppinen-Räisänen et al., 2018). In this study, I measure the differences in status-seeking levels as a trait, regardless of the state or contextual factors.

2.4: Contribution of the proposed scale

This current study offers three unique contributions. First, my approach treats NfS as a multidimensional factor. The previous scales have either equated NfS with a status-consumption tendency (Eastman et al., 1999) or characterized it as a motive to climb the social ladder (Dubois et al., 2012). However, the status motive can be focused on either being exclusive (having better things than others) or about achieving more than others (Anderson et al., 2015) or both. Hence, it could be that being high in one dimension and low on the other predicts a prosocial approach to enhance the status, whereas the opposite would lead to conspicuous consumption as a form of status-seeking. This proposition has not been studied before, but investigating it is dependent upon developing a multidimensional scale for NfS, which is the goal of this dissertation.

Second, I explored the interaction between materialism, consumer values, and NfS. No study thus far has examined what outcomes can be expected from people high in need for status but low in materialism. It could be that status-seeking individuals would pursue other means to achieve status, such as knowledge-sharing or prosocial behavior, when they do not see value in material possessions.

Third, status comparison could be the mechanism that affects how people interpret status cues and respond to them via their consumption behavior. An experiment on students' prosocial helping behavior found that engaging in social comparison of student performance (regardless of the comparison direction) reduced students' willingness to help each other (Yip & Kelly, 2013). Another study by Schlosser and Levy (2016) found that the direction of comparison (upward vs downward) predicted charitable behavior. They found that downward comparison increases charitable intentions in comparison to upward comparison. The explanation is that when individuals feel being in a relatively superior position (via downward comparison), their altruistic tendency would increase, whereas when they feel being in a relatively inferior position (via upward comparison), their egoistic tendencies would increase. Thus, helping behavior would increase following downward comparison. However, when the donation appeal depicted charity as a way to help oneself (e.g., giving to cancer research helps protect your own future), willingness to donate increased within the upward comparison condition, but people in the downward comparison condition responded better to a donation appeal that emphasized the benefit of charity to others (e.g., giving to cancer research helps the wellbeing of others; Schlosser & Levy, 2016). To reinterpret these results, it appears that status threat (upward comparison) increases the salience of status-seeking, whereas downward comparison makes individuals more assured about their own status.

There are two main scales currently used to measure NfS. The first is the status consumption scale by Eastman et al. (1999), which aims to measure consumers' orientation towards purchasing status products. The second one is NfS scale by Dubois et al. (2012), which measures the degree to which respondents are concerned about social status ranking.

There are two fundamental problems with Eastman's scale. First, it actually measures people's attitudes towards status products, not the personality dimension that makes people more inclined to value and purchase them. For instance, one item contains the statement "I am interested in new products with status; I would buy a product just because it has status." Items like these ask about what people feel about buying products with status, but not how they are concerned with social status in general. Second, and more importantly, the scale items never define what is meant by status, but rather leaves it to the participant to supply their own understanding of status in this context. This makes the scale more prone to subjective interpretation since people interpret what a status product means in different ways. Not specifying the meaning of the focal constructs can create an artificially valid construct in terms of predicting a specific behavior, but not in terms of construct validity (Smith, 1999). A more constructive scale would illuminate the different domains that people associate with status, to be reflected in the items' wording.

As for Dubois et al.'s (2012) scale, it has a better structure in terms of construct validity, but it lacks dimensionality. The scale basically measures concern with social ranking with items like "I have a desire to increase my position in the social hierarchy", "I want to raise my position relative to others", "getting to climb the social ladder is a priority for me", and :I would like to be viewed as being of higher standing than others." These measures only capture the general tendency of status-seeking, but the scale does not explain the manifestations of social status in real life. For instance, why do you care about climbing the social ladder, and what would being viewed as being of a higher standing entail?

2.5: Need for status and conspicuous consumption

The years following the industrial revolution gave birth to mass-consumer societies, societies in which there was a vibrant middle class and an emerging upper class that had the desires, the opportunities, and the means to enjoy purchasing new products on a regular basis (Goffman, 1951). Sociologists around the turn of the 20^{tth} century asked why people were consuming expensive items in public, more than ever. The sociologist Thorstein Veblen paid attention to the newly emerging class of highly affluent, highly educated, and overtly conspicuous consumers, whom he labeled *the leisure class,* indicating a group that does not have to work and has plenty of time to indulge in leisure (Veblen, 1899). Veblen emphasized that because labor is a sign of class inferiority (you need to work to make a living), the affluent will have conspicuous leisure, using their free time to demonstrate to others how wealthy they are via extravagant parties and long vacations.

Similarly, the conspicuous consumption of expensive goods can be used to signal wealth. As households compete to show off their material possessions, intensified by social comparison with one's reference group, the visible display of consumption becomes necessary for maintaining and improving social status (Page, 1992). Conspicuous consumption is when consumers purchase goods that signal their wealth to achieve a higher social status (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). What is unique about conspicuous consumption is that consumers pay a high price for products that do not have a justifiable added value in terms of quality or functionality. Rather, these products have a signaling value for high socioeconomic status. Veblen gave examples of spending a lot of money on fancy paintings, collecting rare gemstones or antique vases, decorating with exotic ivory, or spending money on extravagant food banquets (1899).

What makes consumption conspicuous is not necessarily the price, because you can pay more money for a larger house or a more durable car, but the fact that the extra price one pays does not translate into a functional utility (Braun & Wicklund, 1989). In other words, if you obtain a similar or only slightly lower degree of utility from a standard product (say a generic purse) compared to the luxury product you buy (e.g., a luxury-brand purse), then your consumption becomes conspicuous because it has no purpose other than getting attention or recognition for the status value of the product.

The condition is also linked to the signaling factor; conspicuous consumption has to be visible to some extent because the desired effect on one's social status has to come from others seeing and appreciating the goods you are consuming (Eastman et al., 1999). This distinction makes a difference when I compare private versus public consumption of luxury goods. For instance, engaging in drinking expensive liquor in private is a form of indulgence, but it will not be considered conspicuous because it is not visible to anybody, whereas displaying one's expensive collection of liquor would be a conspicuous form of consumption.

The concept of conspicuous consumption has been elaborated upon to explain and predict people's tendency to consume luxury products and feel attachment to luxury brands. To start, researchers wanted to understand the motivations for luxury consumption. Leibenstein's (1950) model categorized luxury-consumption motives into three categories: the bandwagon, snob, and Veblen effects. A bandwagon effect is when someone consumes a product because a large number of people like it, or because it belongs to the most popular brand. The snob effect is when consumers actually avoid buying products that are available to the masses and prefer a product that only a few can buy (Corneo & Jeanne, 1997). And the Veblen effect occurs when the demand for a product increases because of its high price or signaling effectiveness (Leibenstein, 1950). The distinctions in the model point to the fact that luxury consumption does not necessarily equal conspicuous consumption because there can be forms of non-visible and non-signaling luxury consumption.

The bandwagon effect is a function of the need to belong—to wear, buy, and own what others have—hence it is associated with mass-produced and affordable products. In contrast, the snob effect is a function of seeking exclusivity, which would lead to a preference for less-known products with limited availability. Research reveals that a perceived limited supply of products actually increases consumers' evaluation of a product (Chaudhuri, Mazumdar, & Ghoshal, 2011). This concept has been described in more recent research as the need for uniqueness (Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001).

The Veblen effect is slightly different from the snob effect because it is particularly related to how the consumer estimates how others are going to view the value of the purchased product. So aside from the item's popularity, it should have effective signaling qualities that drive people to consume it. High prices could be one cue, but there are other cues such as brand prominence and recognition by others (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014).

Leibenstein's model pointed to the important factor of price perception as affecting consumers' evaluation, not in the sense of cost-benefit analysis, but in the sense of evaluating the product itself. These three effects could be the basis for developing a status-motive model by which each factor could be a dimension of NfS.

Second, conspicuous consumption is linked to shared social perception; the motivation to buy an item will vary based on the consumer's perception that most others like it (bandwagon), only a few like it (snob), or it will impress others (Veblen effect) (Eastman et al., 1999). Interestingly, Leibenstein's model (1950) has dominated the thinking in behavioral economic models of consumption, but for a long time, it had little effect on the consumer behavior and branding literature. The latter remained mainly focused on the Veblen or signaling motive of luxury consumption (Mason, 1984; Truong et al., 2008).

One reason for this is probably the lingering effect of *role theory* (Goffman, 1959), which conceives of people as actors and "life as a theater." In this sense, all social conduct, including consumption behavior, is a function of image projection, and the products a person buys become symbolic representations of status. Following the logic of this theory, consumers purchase goods in accordance with the expectations of their "audience" and to construct their own identity to fit the desired social image, with the product's intrinsic attributes having little effect on the decision process (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; Perez et al., 2010).

While luxuriousness can be defined by some objective terms or criteria, such as price and accessibility (De Barnier et al., 2012), the pricing itself does not necessarily reflect some inherent superior qualities (although that might be the case), but rather, it is caused by a certain image of exclusivity that a brand, a place, or a service were able to produce via different branding and marketing techniques. The effectiveness of a luxury purchase as a status symbol will be contingent upon how the surrounding others, or the reference group of the consumer, feel about this purchased object and whether they consider it associated with status or not (Berger, 2017).

Luxury products from prominent brands are, in general, effective signals for status (Han et al., 2010). The association between luxury consumption and status goes back to the work of Veblen (1899), who argued that the growing upper class in industrial societies wanted effective signals for their wealth and that flashy items, such as expensive paintings or unique antiques, could serve those goals because they are rare and expensive.

Luxury products do not normally have superior intrinsic qualities, nor do they add functional value for users; nonetheless, they have social signaling value because fewer people can have them, conveying the exclusive status of their owners (Dubois et al., 2012). For the social value to be achieved, the items must be inaccessible to the majority of people, but highly visible (Chao & Schor, 1998). Visibility ensures that people verify the intent of the consumer to display wealth (Corneo & Jeanne, 1997); thus, this was dubbed *conspicuous consumption,* an intentionally visible act (Mason, 1984).

Based on this premise, the value attributed to certain commodities or brands must be shared within the same social context, so both the consumers and the surrounding audience appreciate the value of the signaling item (Chao & Schor, 1998). In other words, if people in a given community do not associate a specific brand with status, then this brand will not indicate a presumed status to the consumer, even if it has a higher-than-average price. Social status is an intersubjective concept, which involves both how one feels about status signaling and our assumption that others will associate our actions as signs of status (Bellezza et al., 2013). If that is the case, should we not see different forms of status signaling, expressed in status-enhancing actions other than luxury consumption?

Different forms of consumption have been proposed in previous research as functions of status-seeking, such as eating organic products (Kareklas et al., 2014), buying eco-friendly products (Griskevicius et al., 2010), ordering healthier meals (Puska et al., 2018), or donating to charity (Kataria & Regner, 2015; White & Peloza, 2009). Ultimately, NfS can either produce self-centered consumption (conspicuous or luxury consumption) or prosocial behavior (e.g. charity or philanthropy). Both outcomes have been seen in multiple studies (e.g. Anik et al., 2009; Ariely et al., 2009; Simpson et al., 2018; Winterich et al., 2013; Yip & Kelly, 2013). However, no study to date has explained how NfS leads to charitable behavior as opposed to luxury consumption, or even both simultaneously. We propose that we lack an answer because of the current operational definition of status-seeking, and the psychometric indicators used to measure an individual's level of need for status. If NfS is treated as a multidimensional construct, then we could examine if different dimensions or latent variables of status-seeking motivate individuals to contrasting behavioral actions.

Scholars have noticed that conspicuous consumption varies not only based on income levels, but also by individual differences (Mason, 1984). Starting in the late 1980s and early 1990s, marketing and retail research began reexamining the antecedents and process of luxury consumption, offering different motives for conspicuous consumption, namely that conspicuous consumption is a type of compensatory behavior. They proposed the feeling of inadequacy as a predictor of status consumption in one domain, such that people who are low in one domain will appropriate the prestige symbols that signal excellence in that domain (Braun & Wicklund, 1989). One's sense of secured identity in a specific domain (e.g. wealth, competence, athletic performance) increases compensatory behavior. If people are committed to an identity, but they perceive themselves as lacking in representing this identity, they will seek the prestige symbols associated with it (Braun & Wicklund, 1989). For example, Braun & Wicklund (1989) found that amateur tennis players were more interested in buying products from a well-known tennis brand than experts were. The main takeaway is that NfS is contextual; the less actual status people have, the more status-enhancing symbols they will seek. I suggest that status-seeking is an inherent human drive, that is fundamental to all, but varies in intensity across individuals, and in salience across cultures and contexts.

Richins and Dawson (1992) proposed another theory that posited that conspicuous consumption is a function of materialist values. Materialism is defined in terms of three factors: equating success with the number of possessions, the centrality of possessions in one's life, and defining happiness in terms of material achievements (Richins & Dawson, 1992). People high in materialism are more likely to communicate their social value via stereotypically materialistic possessions, such as appearance-related items (Richins, 1994).

Another approach investigated the psychological motives for prestige-seeking behavior and proposed that the multiple social and individual motivations, the motives of sociability and self-expression, are the most important (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Conspicuousness (consuming luxury in public) will be high for people whose motive is to impress others; therefore, they would prefer items that are visibly expensive. (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999).

However, neither materialism nor conspicuousness (i.e., the Veblen effect) can explain why some luxury consumers prefer to avoid expensive items. This effect is referred to as snob appeal, which is the tendency to prefer more exclusive and rare items that make someone more unique than others (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). In contrast, some consumers would mostly focus on recognition by others; hence, popular brands will be their preference, regardless of the price (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Adopting items that are stereotypically associated with luxury, which represents bandwagon motives, and when people are solely focused on the outward social impression (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999).

The popularity of luxury products represented a challenge to researchers since it removed their rarity appeal. In other words, owning a luxury-brand item is not necessarily a good sign of status anymore, especially in wealthy and post-industrial societies. What would then predict consumers' avoidance of the bandwagon effect in luxury spending? One explanation is that consumers' need for uniqueness (Tian et al., 2001) makes people prefer items that are counter to the mainstream. Therefore, a high need for uniqueness would lead to avoiding bandwagon consumption of luxury products (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). What this research shows is that the preference for a unique status can actually lead, sometimes, to decreasing the consumption of luxury products. There are two conclusions to draw from that: first, that status-seeking should be defined in a broader sense than status signaling, and second, that there must be other forms of expressing status, if luxury purchasing is not preferred by all status-seeking people.

Is conspicuous consumption the same as status consumption? One reason for the contradictions and confusion surrounding these concepts is the inadequacy in differentiating between luxury consumption (like expensive items) and conspicuous consumption (as in signaling wealth). Whereas luxury consumption can be defined by the consumption of luxury items as defined by price (which surely vary by time and location), conspicuous consumption is related to signaling-related consumption. Hence, in theory, we can observe non-luxury conspicuous consumption or luxury inconspicuous consumption.

Researchers have indicated that conspicuous consumption is not exclusive to the rich and affluent (Truong et al., 2009). In fact, almost all societies in history, with different levels of economic development, have practices of conspicuous consumption demonstrated with large and expensive weddings or flashy adornments or food festivals in rural villages (Mason, 1984; Chaudhuri et al., 2011). As long as the product has the effect of signaling status to others, it would be considered conspicuous because the price signaling can vary from one economic condition to the other, or between different contexts (Fuchs et al., 2013).

One problem with automatically equating status consumption with conspicuous consumption is that it neglects consumers' brand perception. If a group of consumers considers a pair of Nike shoes to be a status symbol, then the purchase of this product by one member of this group will be considered conspicuous, for it was intended to display their status to comparative others. But if a group of people considers Nike shoes just average, then purchasing them would not constitute conspicuous consumption. Buying any variety of shoes can be considered a status-seeking action if the driving motive is to enhance the feeling of respect and respectability by others, regardless of whether they are rare or popular products.

2.6: Alternative outcomes for status-seeking motivation

There is the phenomenon of status-seeking as inconspicuous consumption, which is the preference for subtle signals of luxury rather than flashy products (Eckhardt et al., 2015). Recent developments towards subtler luxuries have disrupted the classical view that equated luxury consumption to conspicuous consumption (Berger et al., 2010). Starting from Veblen's assumption that luxuriousness is meant for conspicuousness, one should find a positive correlation between brand prominence or logo explicitness and product price. However, Berger and Ward (2010) studied preferences for luxury products and found an inverted U relationship between price and brand prominence: the higher the price of a luxury product, the more subtle the brand signaling becomes.

One recent development in the luxury market is that an ostentatious display of luxury products is no longer indicative of the upper class; even middle-class and working-class consumers can afford to buy from luxury brands and go to the same shopping stores and venues that the affluent attend (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Nueno & Quelch, 1998). The mass availability of luxury presents a crucial problem for status consumers: how can they differentiate themselves if the brand gets so diluted? By choosing signaling techniques that are more exclusive and immune to *outsiders*. In other words, status consumption would have an associative motive, by which individuals seek things that not necessarily signal wealth but signal belonging to an exclusive group with substantial cultural capital (Eckhardt et al., 2015).

Berger and Ward (2010) proposed that *insiders* try to make decisions and adopt specific tastes that are hard for the mainstream to imitate. This group of insider consumers would prefer inconspicuous status consumption that avoids easily interpreted brand signals (Berger and Ward, 2010). A series of experiments found that insiders (consumers with high domain-related knowledge) prefer subtle signals in luxury consumption, and the preference is boosted when the consumption is public (Berger & Ward, 2010). Based on that, I conclude that differentiating oneself from the masses is one key component of the status motive, and that association with an exclusive group is more important than seeking popularity in the high status-seeking consumers.

In addition to the effects of brand knowledge, there is the fact that consumers can vary in whether they care about status when it comes to shopping (Clark et al., 2007). This idea differentiates between *status consumers* (those who consider the social value when they shop) and *role-relaxed shoppers* (those who ignore status appeal in their shopping habits).

This line of research led others to present a four-type taxonomy of luxury consumers: *patricians, parvenus, proletarians, and poseurs* (Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010). *Patricians* are people with high levels of wealth and cultural capital who are willing to pay for products that emphasize their willingness to the elite class. That means they prefer subtle signals that only other patricians can interpret, avoiding luxury brands that are conspicuously loud (Han et al., 2010).

Parvenus (from the Latin *pervenire*, meaning "to reach," and French *parvenir*, "to arrive") are also affluent, but they lack cultural knowledge about the details of domain-specific qualities. They have a high need for status signaling that drives them to prefer products with explicit signals of consciousness and status (Han et al., 2010). This group would be closer to the Veblen motive explained in Leibenstein's (1950) model, while patricians would be linked to the snob motive.

Those in the third category, *poseurs* (French for "imposters"), are similar to parvenus in terms of having a high need for status signaling, but poseurs lack the financial means to afford it (Han et al., 2010). They represent the base for mass luxury: they like low-status conspicuous products (such as discounted products, simple products from luxury brands, or counterfeit products) and products with loud brand logos in general (Han et al., 2010). The poseur group includes those who are driven by the bandwagon effect or an inclination towards the most popular symbols.

Finally, *proletarians* are consumers who can neither afford nor care about luxury products and status symbols. The experiment run by Han et al. (2010) tested the predictions of the model: patricians should pay more for luxury bags (Louis Vuitton (LV) and Chanel were used for the experiment) with subtle signals, parvenus and poseurs should pay a higher price for products with loud status signals. The predictions were supported; patricians decreased their willingness to pay when the brand became more prominent, while parvenus expressed a higher willingness to pay for loud products (Han et al., 2010).

What is interesting about inconspicuous status products is that major luxury brands are aware of it. A few studies have found that brands like LV and Burberry actually charge more for products with subtle signals, while the more affordable products they carry will have lower prices (Eckhardt et al., 2015). Other studies have replicated the brand prominence effects to find that the larger the salience of the brand logo, the less status perception the product will get (Saddlemyer et al., 2016). The psychological explanation for avoiding explicit signaling can be due to the need for uniqueness and the need for conformity (Kauppinen-Räisänen et al., 2018).

If one assumes that conspicuous consumption is all about wealth signaling, why are counterfeit luxury products not more popular? If the only value of luxury brands is to signal status, then all status consumers should switch to them if we put aside the ethical objections (Perez et al., 2010). However, the empirical results do not confirm this assumption; studies have shown that the value of authentic luxury products actually increases when they are presented next to identical counterfeit products (Geiger-Oneto et al., 2013). Consumers with susceptibility to normative influence and a high need for status signaling would have a higher intention to buy counterfeit luxury products (Phau & Teah, 2009). However, consumers who possess knowledge capital related to the fashion domain expressed less interest in counterfeit products and a higher willingness to pay for authentic products (Han et al., 2010).

According to the taxonomy by Han et al. (2010), the most likely group to choose counterfeit products is poseurs, because they have a high need for status but high price sensitivity as well. A gap in the counterfeit luxury research is that NfS has been claimed to have both positive (Phau & Teah, 2009) and negative (Chan et al., 2015; Geiger-Oneto et al., 2013) effects on counterfeit purchase intention. Hence, status signaling is not limited to material capital, but also includes cultural capital.

Social status can be understood as someone being perceived as knowledgeable and distinctive about their choices and general appearance. When NfS is defined as the need for uniqueness, it increases the preference for authentic products (the patricians' example), while if it is defined as the need for conspicuousness (the Veblen effect), it will increase the preference for counterfeit luxury products (Phau & Teah, 2009). However, this tension illustrates how status consumption is not unitary, and that for some luxury consumers, signaling wealth is key, whereas others like to be recognized for their subjective qualities via their consumption choices.

Ultimately, NfS would cover both the need for exclusivity and the need for recognition, but theoretical models tend to choose one dimension over the other (Chan et al., 2015; Kauppinen-Räisänen et al., 2018). From previous research, it looks like the need for popularity is slightly different from status, because status entails differentiation or standing out as opposed to being indistinguishable from the masses.

The model of conspicuous consumption proposed by Eastman and Eastman (2015) suggests exclusivity, conspicuousness, and fitting in as three external antecedents for status consumption, while hedonism, perfectionism, and identity expression are identified as three internal antecedents. The problem with this model is that it conflates status consumption (the action) with NfS (the trait), while it considers the psychological motives of exclusivity and conspicuousness external while they are in fact internal (Corneo & Jeanne, 1997).

A major problem of the research reviewed so far is that there are two concepts being used interchangeably: one is status-seeking, the other is conspicuousness (wealth signaling). Nonetheless, we have seen that seeking status or prestige can be manifested by other means, such as the preference for the product with less brand prominence or buying cheap counterfeit products. These two approaches demonstrate that the underlying motives are different. To understand why status-seeking involves different motivations, we turn to evolutionary psychology, which can illuminate our assumptions about the roots of status consumption. We need to look deeper into the etiology of NfS and to think more broadly beyond luxury-consumption tendencies. Analyzing NfS from adaptationist lenses should help elucidate the function of status-seeking in human behavior.

Q1: What factor of NfS is positively related to luxury-spending attitude?

2.7: Need for status in evolutionary psychology

The conceptual framework of NfS is rooted in evolutionary psychology. Specifically, it is assumed to be one of six basic human needs in the revised pyramid of needs (Kenrick et al., 2010). These needs are assumed to be not direct goals but rather ultimate causes that drive other immediate physiological needs. They include physical safety, belongingness, status, mate acquisition, mate retention, and parenting. These six motives are not necessarily ordered in terms of immediacy or priority, but they are sequenced in accordance with the stages of developmental psychology, by which the status motive develops in early adolescent stages after developing a need to belong, but before puberty and developing a sexual desire (Dijkstra et al., 2010; Kenrick et al., 2010).

There is also an evolutionary sequence for the emergence of these needs or motives, such that the need to belong is endemic to all social animals, but NfS developed later for species with more sophisticated social structures and cognitive abilities, like humans (Kenrick et al., 2010). Those needs are "basic" because they were essential for the survival of our ancestors; those who could find an affiliative group, earn respect, find a mate, and establish a family were able to pass down their genes; those who failed on those fronts were not able to reproduce (Griskevicius & Kenrick, 2013). Surely, there is some tension in those needs in the sense that some efforts might enhance one goal but diminish another; think of how risk-taking might enhance status and mate desirability, but harm protection and parenting prospects. Therefore, there are individual differences regarding the extent to which we care about belonging, status, mating, and the like (Griskevicius & Kenrick, 2013).

Besides individual differences, another caveat to this model of needs is that one motive is not necessarily more important than the others; rather, the priority of each need is affected by situational or external factors. In other words, thinking about one motive and planning to achieve its fulfillment are triggered by environmental or interpersonal factors, such as facing danger or seeing an attractive potential mate (Griskevicius & Kenrick, 2013). For example, seeing an attractive person of the opposite sex, the desire for mating would be more pronounced; hence, it might momentarily eclipse other motives. Following that, however, the most pronounced or salient motive during one's thinking process would ultimately have the strongest effect on the decision process and outcomes (Griskevicius & Kenrick, 2013).

To give an example from previous research, one experiment found that the combination of a woman's ovulation cycle and social comparison triggered by other attractive females would increase the preference for luxury brands and the willingness to pay for them (Durante et al., 2010). This notion is important because when studying status consumption, one must keep in mind that status-seeking would be different not only across individuals, but also across different conditions. Understanding that activating different motives affects human preferences explains the variance in people's reactions to messages, in tandem with the trait variable. In addition, the model does not assume people are actively thinking about NfS when making decisions, as one rarely thinks about one's survival and mating success based on status (Scott-Phillips et al., 2011). Rather, the immediate goals of gaining access to some groups or being awarded a special prize are what contribute ultimately to status-seeking needs.

When we talk about evolutionary explanations of natural and social phenomena, we ought to differentiate between the proximate and ultimate causes of behavior (Scott-Phillips et al., 2011). This distinction was coined by the biologist Ernst Mayr (1961) to explain how the direct instigator of an animal's behavior is often different from the ultimate purpose or function that this behavior achieves. For instance, when we examine bird migration, the proximate explanation for it is that during winter, birds get less exposure to sunlight, and their body temperatures go down, which leads them to move and seek a warmer environment. However, the ultimate explanation for bird migration is that it is linked to better chances for the mating and hatching season, with better nutritional resources, and it is already encoded in the bird's DNA that it has to fly towards the Equator when winter begins (Mayr, 1961). It goes without saying that birds themselves are not conscious about the ultimate causes of their behavior, but the evolutionary mechanism selected for the actions that serve the ultimate functions.

Similarly, there are proximate causes and ultimate functions of conspicuous consumption and prosocial behavior. The proximate explanation for luxury spending, for example, could be the pleasurable sensation associated with spending money freely or wanting to impress a potential dating partner. However, the ultimate cause could be that those who have exhibited an ability to acquire and spend material resources have had advantages in terms of mating opportunities and the upbringing of successful offspring, which resulted in associating conspicuous consumption with attractiveness and fitness for long-term relationships (De Fraja, 2009).

Consumers might not be aware of the proximate functions of their actions most of the time, in the sense that they would consciously think they are buying luxury products because they think it will enhance their social standing, or how their desires are linked to evolutionary-evolved needs. Likewise, the link between NfS and prosocial spending is probably not immediate or direct. Namely, charity might stem from an adherence to social norms, religious teachings, or moral values instilled in an individual, but the ultimate function of charitable behavior would be as a reputation-enhancing mechanism for the individual and a form of creating a group advantage for cooperative groups via reciprocal altruism (Bereczkei et al., 2007). We will not further discuss the psychological explanation provided for prosocial behavior, which is mostly concerned with the ultimate causes, as they do not particularly speak to what individuals say are the reasons behind them engaging in prosocial actions.

2.8: Need for status and prosocial behavior

From a layperson perspective, acts are either intended to help oneself or help others. From a psychological perspective, however, this distinction is not clear-cut. How can individuals engage in any activity that they think will be of no benefit to them at all? The key to understanding this is to know the difference between material rewards and social rewards. Material rewards are known as forms of direct compensation, such as money or positions of power and influence. In contrast, social rewards refer to the benefits of being included in a social group, being admired, and having a level of respect and prestige within a social group (Kataria & Regner, 2015). The evolutionary explanation of human behavior is that all individual acts must have served as an adaptive function, such that it has increased the chances of survival and reproduction for our ancestors (Kafashan et al., 2014). Prosocial behavior could be puzzling to explain if we have a narrow understanding of human self-interest. If someone is investing energy and time into an action, there must be a reward, but it does not have to be direct or material? Different theories provided evolutionary explanations for prosocial behavior, ranging from reciprocal explanations (Nowak & Sigmund, 2005) to the notion of intertwined vested interests (Tooby & Cosmides, 1996) and reputation signaling motives (Glazer & Konrad, 1996).

All of these theories explain how prosocial behavior ends benefiting the giver in some form, while disagreeing on what value the receivers anticipate and how it relates to adaptive responses. The idea of reciprocal altruism is the simplest one. It posits that people expect to be helped in the future when they help someone now (Kafashan et al., 2014). A basic premise of the theory is that reciprocity does not have to be direct; rather, it is mostly indirect. Indirect reciprocity simply means "I help you and somebody else helps me," so prosocial acts are not built on expecting a reciprocal act from the aided person in the near future (Nowak & Sigmund, 2005). This dynamic will lead to a fitness advantage for a group, such that a group of reciprocal actors would survive in the long run more likely than a group of non-reciprocal actors because non-reciprocal actors will not enjoy the benefits of cooperation or sharing of resources. This dynamic has been replicated by economic games to show the effect of reciprocity on survival (Nowak & Sigmund, 2005).

A similar explanation for the benefit of prosociality is slightly more complex, and it posits that for social species, individual interests become so intertwined that helping others would involve the benefit of one's long-term goals (Tooby & Cosmides, 1996). Prosocial actors would have a vested interest in the wellbeing of the recipients because they rely on those recipients in other domains. For instance, if we as group members are interdependent for resource sharing, protection, and kin care at different levels, individuals will be incentivized to have more reliable partners to take part in these activities, because we as givers have vested interests in their being able to contribute to the larger group (Tooby & Cosmides, 1996).

A third approach considers prosocial behavior as a signaling strategy, by which a prosocial act is a signal for the quality and desirability of the sender's traits (Bereczkei et al., 2010). This approach is what I deem relevant to NfS. In societies with different levels of material advancement, prosocial acts are exemplified by charitable giving or community engagement. These have been understood as signals for the status of the actor (Glazer & Konrad, 1996). For instance, anthropologists studying aboriginal tribes in Australia found that one way for young men to enhance their social rank is to volunteer to give away the animals they bring back from their hunts as gifts with no compensation. That action likely makes them more trusted and more respected in tribal gatherings (Birkás et al., 2006). This would mean that prosocial behavior is actually competitive, a process by which members compete to keep prosocial reputations (Griskevicius et al., 2010). That would be demonstrated by actions such as "I will give people advice because I will be considered an expert," or "I will help people organize a prosocial event because it will add to my leadership reputation."

These adaptationist explanations show why such acts became advantageous. However, the motives are not necessarily explicit in the actor's mind (Ariely et al., 2009). All of these explanations point to the direction that there is always benefit to social behavior that outweighs the cost of giving (at least at the macro-level). Any model that aims to explain the outcomes of status-seeking must account for prosocial actions by individuals, as well as conspicuous consumption. Nonetheless, NfS has to be redefined to account for motives related to the recognition of one's personal qualities. There could also be situations in which prosocial acts are associated with exclusive groups, as I have explained earlier. However, these phenomena are neglected in the existing models.

2.9: Gaps in the existing scales

The association between social status and connection to special or important people has been brought up to demonstrate that status is to a large extent about belonging to a higher group in the social ladder, which is consistent with the research in anthropology and evolutionary psychology (Bercovitch, 1991; Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). In addition, recognizing the value and importance of an individual is another component of status. When someone is perceived as knowledgeable, competent, and experienced in whatever domain, that means they possess more social power because people defer to them when it comes to related issues (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). This notion is what is usually referred to as *prestige;* the conferred status by others that relates to someone's perceived qualities (Wegener, 1992).

Social status is specifically related to prestige, consisting of respectability by others, as opposed to dominance (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). When we think within the context of consumer behavior, conferred status can be achieved via wearing, for example, the most exclusive and desirable items that signal to others the refined taste of the individual (Lee et al., 2019). Similarly, spending on important causes can confer prosociality and a sense of sophistication around the individual, so they would be sought for advice and gain respect among their peers (Boone, 1998).

According to the conceptual definition, social status entails respect and admiration by others, and opportunities to be ahead of the herd in reaching opportunities so people concerned with that should be labeled as being high in NfS. The major goal of my scale is to accurately delineate the dimensionality of NfS construct (i.e., the different motives with NfS) and to produce items that are reflective of what people feel and desire when they think about high status.

Charitable behavior can be a form of status-seeking behavior, depending on the context and framing of the message. People could be assigned to two conditions of donation appeals. The donation appeal would be framed either as a way of enhancing status by emphasizing the exclusivity of the charitable organization (e.g., our donors are elite individuals in the community; you can become one of them) or by underlining the prestige outcome (e.g., your donation will earn you an honorable mention on our social media page). In the control condition, the organization would mention no prestigious support and would promise anonymity about the donation act. Seeing charity as a status-enhancing technique should increase the willingness to pay for those high in NfS. To address the issue of other individual differences, I also study the moderating effects of materialism (Richins, 2004). This leads to a second research question:

Q2: What factor of NfS is positively related to charitable behavior attitude?

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

3.1: Overview of methods and research steps

The approach used here follows the steps of scale development as outlined by Carpenter (2018), Churchill (1979), and Worthington and Whittaker (2006). The first steps are about conceptual development and producing a literature review that covers the boundaries and assumptions of the construct at hand. This exercise is elaborated above. Following that, researchers must undertake qualitative research to uncover the distinct and common meanings of the target concept and disentangle the dimensionality of the construct. Hence, I conducted seven in-depth interviews to identify NfS dimensions and measurement items. After analyzing the interview transcripts, I conducted a pilot survey to test the reliability and quality of items and how many factors should be included in the scale.

Based on the previous status consumption literature, the possible dimensions for NfS are the Veblen motive, snob motive, and popularity motive, which can have different labels, such as the need for uniqueness or exclusivity (Corneo & Jeanne, 1997). Since there are different labels and definitions for what those factors mean, qualitative interviews were needed to refine understandings and definitions. For example, the snob appeal, first proposed by Leibenstein (1950), can mean different things: it can either mean the preference for scarce and exclusive products, or it can mean preferring items that distinguish the individual from the masses (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999).

What both understandings are alluding to is that a snobbish consumer prefers things that are not common and that are inaccessible to most people. Therefore, some scholars have proposed constructs such as the need for distinction or the need for uniqueness (Chan et al., 2015; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Researchers could use these scales as conduits for measuring

NfS; hence, I tested whether the scale I developed was both distinctive and related to these established scales. Next, I conducted the main survey to allow for exploratory factor analysis (EFA), which yielded more consistent items and reliable subscales. In addition, a second survey was conducted, which included theoretically correlated constructs to apply confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to measure the predictions of the proposed model.

3.2: Qualitative research steps

3.2.1: Step 1: In-depth interviews

I conducted in-depth interviews to understand how people understand status in general, and what type of activities and objects they associate with status. I consulted two faculty members who are experts in interviewing techniques and procedures and developed an interviewing protocol. I also asked three undergraduate assistants to read the protocol and identify unclear questions or flaws in the flow of topics. I then conduced nine in-depth interviews with participants from a sample of college students ages 18 to 24 and the general public.

An initial round of interviews was conducted to start initiating materials for the question-generation phase, but following the pilot test, additional interviews were added to assess if some factors were missing from the pool of items. During each interview, only the moderator and the interviewee were present in a room, with a laptop used for audio-recording. All interviews started with reading the consent conditions out loud and taking verbal confirmation from participants that they agreed to participate. All records were kept confidential, and the names were altered in the transcript to ensure anonymity.

I created the interview protocol relying on two things: using past definitions of the concepts related to the realm of investigation, such as social status, prestige, power, influence, recognition, luxury, and so forth. I introduced questions that relate to these concepts while choosing words that are more in tune with the common language. For example, I did not use words such as “snob” or “prestige” since they might be misunderstood or be suggestive. I instead asked about what people thought of being looked up to, or what it meant to have a unique social position.

I also looked into previous scales on status-seeking and status consumption (see Dubois et al., 2012; Eastman et al., 1999) and added qualitative questions similar to the scale items. I organized the protocol sections to reflect the general conception about social status at the beginning, and to reflect each dimension I proposed in later sections. Since the scale items are supposed to be reflective of the psychometric construct at hand, I worded my questions such that they ask respondents whether they care about what participants think and feel about social status and not about their own consumption habits.

My proposed scale is not meant to reflect attitudes towards luxury consumption or brand preferences, for those are related constructs but not the same as the internal motive. For example, I would ask, “what does it mean for you that someone has status?”, and then I would gauge how people responded to that, asking follow-up questions for clarification. I followed a semi-structured format, as it is recommended for cognitive interviewing (Beatty & Willis, 2007). The interview protocol is included in Appendix 1.

The interviews were transcribed using *Temi* services, which is a website that uses AI transcription. The transcripts were returned with an accuracy rate of around 85–90%. Then, the transcripts were compared to the audio recordings, and mistakes were corrected to make the transcripts more accurate.

Following the correction of transcripts, two trained coders conducted thematic analysis on them. They followed an inductive qualitative approach to content analysis. The unit of analysis was the single responses of the interviewees to the interviewer's question (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This was not intended to be a summative analysis; rather, coders were working to determine whether certain themes existed within the body of the text. Coders were instructed to analyze using three categories: snob appeal (motive to be part of the elite), recognition motive (seeking recognition by others in terms of personal qualities), and general attributes of status seeking. The two coders separately coded the interviews while provided with broad definitions for each theme: snob appeal was defined as any indication of or emphasis on attributes such as luxury, exclusivity, high-class, VIP status, special access, influence, connections, showing off, fanciness, and extravagance; the recognition motive was defined as an emphasis on things like achievement, accomplishment, reputation, community engagement, service, being persuasive, trustworthiness, expertise, and knowledge. After the coders completed the coding, I compared the results from each coder. Each coder also provided notes on how they made decisions about the categorization of each unit of analysis. The notes and operational definitions of categories were combined, to create a coding schema. This coding schema was applied again in content analysis to iron out disagreements and inconsistent categories of data. The coders met in-person for one last time to discuss areas of disagreement, and consensus was reached based on these discussions.

Following that, I used *Atlas.ti* software for content analysis (Friese, 2019), to quantify the frequency underlying themes and compare the results with the manual coding. The software identified three major themes: belonging to an elite group and having exclusive access, being a good member of the community and being respected, and a collection of diverse attributes such as being followed, being influential, or having many friends. This was in line with the coders' analysis, although a few quotes fell into different categories. After reaching agreement, I submitted the transcript text with the coding categories to *Atlas.ti* for automated analysis. The count statistics are provided in Table 3.1 (Krippendorff's $\alpha = .79$).

I then compared those findings to how status-seeking has usually been defined in the consumer-behavior literature to see how people's views fit with the theoretical frameworks proposed by scholars from different fields. What emerged from this process is an understanding that, for most participants, status is not necessarily linked to luxury consumption, but in fact, it is linked to how someone is engaged with the community, being helpful to others, and being competent.

Table 3.1: Themes identified during interview data analyses

Themes that emerged from analysis of interview responses	Count
Exclusiveness (association with elite group)	44
Recognition (reputation associated with good traits and qualities)	80
Other	32

The major theme that emerged from the interviews was the discovery of the need to associate with exclusive/elite group as a major factor in status-seeking. Surprisingly, it was the most prominent theme in the participants' comments. Signaling wealth per se was rarely mentioned by interviewees, therefore, conspicuousness did not emerge as a major theme.

From the qualitative interviews, two dimensions emerged that resemble factors suggested by the literature review. First, NfS partly refers to being recognized as a part of an elite or exclusive group (being associated with high-status individuals). It also means being recognized for one's unique qualities and value by surrounding others. We call these two dimensions need for exclusivity and need for recognition, respectively.

These two dimensions can be considered antecedents of status consumption (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014). Nonetheless, there are some differences that are worth noting. First, *snob appeal* refers to the tendency to associate oneself with high-status individuals. The *Veblen effect* refers to signaling status, and the *bandwagon appeal* refers to the tendency to adopt practices and products that are widely popular (Leibenstein, 1950). However, the exclusivity drive I propose is more about feeling a sense of belonging to a more special and exclusive group within one community. It is not necessarily about the act of signaling, but more about the sense of belonging to a top group. Under this assumption, there is no differentiation between the need to distinguish oneself from the low-status group and the need to associate with the high-status group, since both motives are essentially the same (i.e. seeking exclusive status ultimately means avoiding an average status.

The recognition effect has not been identified before in the literature in terms of the need to acknowledge someone's qualities. When people think of their status, they would mention how they like others praising them and valuing their opinions. We call this effect *respectability.* The previous status-seeking paradigms have not accounted for this factor.

Last, the popularity motive differs from the bandwagon effect in the sense that it is not about seeking popular products, but rather about the need to become popular. Leibenstein's model proposes that the bandwagon motive leads to the consumption of popular products, which is the opposite of consuming exclusive products. There is a major difference between those who seek the most common products and those who seek specific products that would make them popular. Popularity can come via different means, either by having extraordinary talent, eccentric traits, provocative demeanor, excellent achievements, and so on. Therefore, popularity by itself could be an outcome or a bridge to social status, but it is not necessarily part of it. We would, however, still consider whether popularity indicators can and should be part of NfS scale.

3.2.2: Step 2: Item generation

The goal of this phase was to generate a set of items that are reasonably comprehensive and exhaustive in assessing the target construct. Following factor analysis guides (Kline, 2014; Morrison, 2009), good items should be theoretically sound and relevant (i.e., can be supported by the literature review) in addition to being simply worded and understandable by the target population(s) that will be the subjects of the test.

To produce high-quality items, the wording of the indicators followed the analysis of the in-depth interviews, such that the phrases and words I included resemble the way members of the general public talk (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). For example, if I am assessing the participants' conception about *prestige,* I would use more relatable phrases to refer to this concept, such as "being recognized, being acknowledged, perceived as influential, etc.," as opposed to using an academic term that can be confusing.

In addition, the generated items were reviewed by three experts in the fields of communication and consumer behavior to confirm that the items were consistent and reflective of the targeted construct (Carpenter, 2018). The experts suggested making a few items shorter and more concise, and one expert suggested adding items related to popularity, which could be either a dimension or a construct related to NfS. Hence, the combination of relying on a literature review for initiating a basis for the proposed factors, relying on interviews for item wording, and expert reviews for improving face validity provided a good foundation for the initial item pool.

Following the content analysis, I created a pool of 82 questions that could be categorized by the themes of exclusiveness, popularity, and recognition. These items were reviewed by two experts, as mentioned earlier. Then they were entered into an online survey that was launched on Amazon Mechanical Turk to test the scale on a general-population sample. The findings are discussed in the next section.

3.2.3: Step 3: Pilot survey

A pilot survey was conducted to collect preliminary data on the questionnaire items. The sample consisted of 207 (43.5% female) participants drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. The average age = 32.1, and the average annual household income = US$74,000. After agreeing to the consent form, participants were presented with 84 questionnaire items, presented in five waves. The order of questions was randomized to control for order effects. Following their answers to the survey's main items that are meant to measure the focal construct of status-seeking, participants completed some demographic questions for statistical purposes.

Before starting the factor analysis, I checked for missing items or incomplete answers, but none were found in the data. The analysis proceeded to look at the sampling adequacy. The KMO test value was at.940, and Bartlett's test had ($\chi^2 = 2383$; $p < .00$) indicating an acceptable sampling size. To determine the appropriate number of factors to retain, I conducted a scree test with a parallel Monte Carlo simulation, which is a method recommended to show if the Eigenvalues of the observed factors are better than random (Watkins, 2005). The test showed that two factors should be retained since the third factor has a lower cumulative Eigenvalue (= .65) than the randomly simulated factor (1.2).

Then, multiple rounds of factor analysis were conducted using the principal axis factoring (PAF) method and promax rotation (Osborne et al., 2008). A measurement item would be eliminated if an item: a) had a loading value below.32, or b) was cross-loaded into more than one factor (Yong & Pearce, 2013). This process resulted in retaining 14 items loaded onto two factors. The pool of items is included in Appendix 1. The total variance explained is 71.68%. The correlation between the two factors was s = .67.

To further explore the dimensionality of the construct, I generated a pool of items as indicators of each of the two dimensions. Following that, a pilot survey was launched to evaluate the initial pool of generated indicators (86 questions). After conducting a common factor analysis via EFA, the items were reduced to 14 variables, which loaded on only two factors. The explained variance of the construct (Eigenvalue = .71) was high. Reliability analysis was conducted for each factor's sub-scale. For Factor 1, Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$. For Factor 2, Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$. The first factor deals with an inclination towards exclusive groups, while factor two comprises the concept of achievement recognition.

The pilot test helped me identify the two main factors that were suspected to be operative. Each sub-scale, or variable, is supposed to yield insightful outcomes for researchers in predicting attitudinal and behavioral outcomes related to spending. The study moving forward focused on confirming if the two dimensions were consistently manifested across surveys with larger samples, and then identifying which dimensions of NfS related to conspicuous spending and which to prosocial spending. The two subsequent surveys of EFA and CFA would achieve these objectives.

3.3: Quantitative research steps

The steps I executed for scale development followed the instructions prescribed by scholars in survey methodology in psychology, communication, and marketing studies. I primarily relied on the comprehensive guide by Kline (2013) and the succinct list outlined by Carpenter (2018).

The research included both qualitative and quantitative research methods to produce the proposed scale. First, I reviewed the literature relevant to NfS and status signaling, primarily from marketing, retailing and evolutionary psychology. This review allowed me to identify general themes or directions of what NfS is primarily about. Upon completion of this review, I conducted a series of in-depth interviews with individuals from different backgrounds, to help reveal the popular subjective understanding of the term and offer a basis for the dimensions that are going to constitute the completed scale.

The interview protocol was reviewed by two methodological experts, and I followed a thematic analysis approach to analyze the data. Thematic analysis, as described in the previous section, is a qualitative approach that focuses on what the major ideas and topics are discussed within a body of text, with less focus on the frequency of mentions or intertextual relationships (Clarke et al., 2015). The interview data, along with the existing literature, gave birth to a large pool of survey items that aimed to reflect the dimensions of the new construct. Following that, I sought expert feedback to examine the dimensions proposed and suggest ways to modify, add, or delete specific items.

After revising the item pool based on expert feedback, I conducted a pilot study to explore what dimensions would emerge from primary data and what items should be retained or removed. Following the analysis of the pilot-study data, two dimensions emerged, and I further consulted experts on whether they truly seem to reflect the construct (as theoretically defined) and if the survey items are reflective and comprehensive enough to reflect these two dimensions.

The main survey was launched for conducting an EFA that would clarify the factor structure and dimensionality and produce inclusive and sufficient scale items with internal reliability. Finally, another survey was conducted to apply CFA, which was meant to produce convergent and discriminate validity tests. Each step in the method is explained in detail in the remainder of this chapter.

3.3.1: Step 4: Exploratory factor analysis

The main survey was launched through *CloudResearch*, which is a panel service run by *Amazon Turk Prime*. *CloudResearch* was chosen due to its relative affordability and the fact that it has general-population data that rely on US census-based cohorts. This service also allows for participant anonymity, since compensation goes only through Amazon's payment system, with no direct compensation going from the investigators' account to the participants. The investigator only pays a sum of money to Amazon for the sample size they asked for, and Amazon compensates the participants. For this study, each participant was paid between US $1.20–$2.

For the scale to have external reliability, the sample ought to reflect, to a reasonable extent, the composition of the general public (which is based on the US population for this survey). To determine the number of respondents, Carpenter (2017) suggests a minimum of five respondents per item is acceptable, while the stricter requirement of 10 respondents per item is more ideal for factor analysis (Costello & Osborne, 2005). According to Fabrigar et al. (1999), a study with fewer than 400 respondents would produce unstable results, such that the data would not accurately reflect population parameter estimates. As the main survey had 38 items, it would require 380 respondents, but exceeding 400 participants was desirable. Hence, 478 respondents completed the survey that was posted online on Qualtrics.

Quota sampling was used in recruiting, which is to ensure that the proportion of Caucasians to non-Caucasian groups is equivalent to the national demographic composition (as reported by the national census), with age and gender distributions close to the national average.

Table 3.2: Frequencies of demographic variables of the EFA survey

Demographic variable	N	Percentage
Age cohort		
• 18-24	48	10.4%
• 25-34	116	25.2%
• 35-44	82	17.8%
• 45-54	66	14.3%
• 55-64	73	15.9%
• 65 and above	75	16.3%
Gender		
• Male	208	43.5%
• Female	269	56.3%
• Non-binary	1	0.2%
Ethnicity		
• White/ Caucasian	320	66.9 %
• Asian	73	15.2 %
• Black/ African American	41	8.6 %
• Hispanic/ Latin American	25	5.2 %
• American Indian, Alaska native, or native Hawaiian	8	1.7 %
• Mixed-race or other	11	2.3 %
Education level		
• High school or less	84	17.6%
• Some college or associate degree	136	28.5%
• Bachelor's degree	166	34.7%
• Master's degree or professional degree	87	18.2%
• Doctoral degree	5	1.0%
Marital status		
• Never married	178	37.2 %
• Currently married	241	50.4 %
• Divorced or widowed	46	9.6 %
• Other (separated, engaged...)	13	2.7 %
Car owner		
• No	67	14%
• Yes	411	86%
Household income level		
• Less than $25,000	74	15.5 %
• $25,000 - $49,999	107	22.4 %
• $50,000 - $74,999	106	22.2 %
• $75,000 - $99,999	75	15.7 %
• $100,000 - $149,999	71	14.9 %
• $150,000 - $199,999	25	5.2 %
• $200,000 - $249,999	12	2.5 %
• $250,000 or more	8	1.7 %
Political affiliation		
• Democrat/ lean Democrat	174	36.4%
• Independent/ non-partisan	142	29.7%
• Republican/ lean Republican	162	33.9%

The sample quotas were implemented by *CloudResearch* panels, and participants with full responses were compensated according to Amazon's terms and policies. No participants were excluded because of poor data quality or failing to pass attention checks. The respondents' demographic information is provided in Table 3.2.

According to estimates by the Census Bureau of the US adult population, the sex ratio is 51.3% female to 48.7% male, and the age distribution is estimated to be 46% aged 18–44 years old, 33% aged 45–64 years old, and 21% aged 65 years or older (Colby & Ortman, 2014). The racial makeup of the US population is estimated to be about 66.7% white and 33.3% non-white (Hixson et al., 2011). Looking at the sample demographic composition, the ratio of white to non-white participants closely resembles the national makeup. Females are overrepresented in the sample by five percentage points. The age composition ($mean_{age} = 45.3$), has less representation among people 65 and older, and those ages 18-44 are overrepresented. That is most likely because of the discrepancy in internet use and access among the age cohorts. All of these variables were taken into account during the data analysis.

3.4: Data analysis

The *jamovi project*, which is statistical software that runs on R, was used to conduct the EFA. Considering the data size, I first considered whether it was adequate for factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index was (KMO = 0.965) overall, and the Bartlett's test (X^2 = x.668; p < 0.001) was significant, which means the sample size is suitable as a run factor for the indicators in the current scale (Fabrigar et al., 1999).

To settle upon a number of factors to be retained, one ought to combine inputs from three main sources: the empirical findings of the survey, the previous results from the qualitative research and pilot study, and the theoretical framework that emerged from the literature review.

The pilot test indicated that there were two dimensions, two main themes, and one minor theme in the qualitative interviews, but the past literature only treated NfS as a unidimensional construct. Hence, it was the task of the researcher to indicate what antecedents of status consumption could be combined under the umbrella of NfS.

Based on the literature, status-seeking has either a status signaling motive (i.e., snob appeal) or a prestige motive, which is about being recognized and respected. The latter part has not been studied by status consumption scholars in marketing, but it was a salient attribute in the qualitative interviews. The factor analysis was conducted to see if those two factors would emerge and stabilize with different numbers of indicators.

First, parallel analysis (PA) was conducted to find the appropriate number of factors. PA avoids binding the factor loadings to a specified Eigenvalue or to a fixed number of factors. Instead, the number of factors is compared to an artificially simulated dataset to test if the Eigenvalue of each added factor is higher, or lower, than the simulated model (hence parallel). Only factors above the random Eigenvalue would be retained (Watkins, 2005).

Initial PA showed that two factors performed better than the simulated Eigenvalues, with the third simulated Eigenvalue becoming higher than the Eigenvalue of the third factor in the observed data (Eigenvalue = 0.42). According to Carpenter (2017), one may re-run the factor analysis to a fixed number of factors that is one degree higher and one degree lower than what the PA shows. This means that in the current dataset, both 2- and 3-factor analyses are advised. The three-factor analysis produced a scale with five items loading on three factors and a cumulative explained variance of 61%, and cross-loadings of items among the three factors. With one factor only, the explained variance fell to 47.3%. Considering that retaining two factors would preserve an explained variance of 60.2%, with no significant cross-loadings between the factors, two factors were retained for the scale.

Next, the factor analysis determined how many items (or indicators) should be retained for each dimension to be reflective of the scale as a whole. The extraction method for the factor analysis was PAF, with Promax rotation. This method is recommended to allow for items to cross-load, which reflects a more natural representation of the construct (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Items retained had to meet the following criteria: an item's factor loading has to be.32 or above to be considered significant (Ferguson & Cox, 1993), the item does not load significantly on two factors or more, i.e., no cross-loadings (Fabrigar et al., 1999), and preferably, items with loading values of.6 and above are highly recommended and desirable (Costello & Osborne, 2005). According to these rules, a process of item deletions was followed, which produced a scale composed of 14 items, with seven items per scale. The cumulative variance accounted for amounted to 60.8%. We also measured the model fit, which showed RMSEA = 0.54 ($p < .001$).

Following the principle of parsimony, I wanted to produce a short version of the scale that retained its explanatory power but contained fewer items (Yong & Pearce, 2013). Therefore, I conducted reliability tests to reveal how many items could be retained (for each factor) with an optimal reliability score. The Cronbach's alpha for Factor 1 (exclusiveness) was .95 with 12 items. For Factor 2, the Cronbach's alpha was .93 with nine items. The correlation between the two factors was $r = .555$.

Filling out scales that contain redundant items might be strenuous for potential respondents, which could lower the quality of responses (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Therefore, a short version of 8–10 items per dimension is preferable to conduct a CFA, which is meant to establish the criterion and discriminate validity of the developed scale. Table 3.3 below shows the factor loadings matrix and reliability scores for the 20-item version of the scale.

Table 3.3: EFA factor loadings and mean scores

Item	Exclusiveness	Respectability	Mean
I like to own products that only elite individuals can own	**0.875**	-0.026	3.11
I like to wear clothes that are only recognized by trendy consumers	**0.847**	-0.057	3.06
I like brands that associate me with high-status groups	**0.884**	-0.050	3.19
I want to belong to exclusive clubs and organizations	**0.748**	0.003	316
I like to be viewed as being of a higher status than others	**0.859**	0.046	3.08
I want to do things that only top individuals can do	**0.773**	0.093	3.39
I prefer to go to places only known by unique individuals	**0.794**	0.072	3.44
I like to belong in the top strata of society	**0.780**	0.040	3.17
I like to travel to places visited by elite individuals	**0.880**	0.065	3.47
I want to go to restaurants with hard-to-get reservations	**0.867**	-0.071	3.12
I like it when people adopt my recommendations	-0.086	**0.782**	5.11
I like it when others seek my advice	-0.093	**0.797**	5.05
I like it when people acknowledge my kindness	-0.102	**0.745**	5.31
I want to be considered an influential person	0.091	**0.650**	4.59
I want to be recognized by the top individuals in my field of work	0.115	**0.650**	4.62
I want to be perceived as a generous person	0.163	**0.690**	5.05
I want my peers to look up to me	0.046	**0.766**	4.69
I want to be recognized as an accomplished person	-0.093	**0.790**	5.03
I like to be perceived as an expert in my field	-0.010	**0.630**	4.79
I want to be perceived as a successful person	0.045	**0.767**	5.03
Eigenvalue	9.17	2.20	
Percentage of explained variance	35.2	29.6	

Note: The PAF extraction method was used in combination with a 'Promax' rotation (jamovi project, 2018).

The results from the EFA closely match the results of the pilot test, in which the same two items were produced. However, when factor rotation is set to load on three factors, a third dimension emerges, which is the popularity motive. The need for popularity exists in the psychological literature as a distinct construct from NfS (de Bruyn et al., 2012). Truly, popularity is relevant to achieving status, such that more popular figures are more able to gain access to influential individuals and the resources, and would have a wider recognition of their abilities (Santor et al., 2000).

However, the popularity items cross-loaded with the other two dimensions. This can be explained by the fact that popularity can be both an outcome of status achievement (you become famous because you gained status) and an antecedent (you become popular, which gives you opportunities for status climbing). There can also be scenarios in which status and popularity are not aligned (e.g., being famous for something that is demeaning or embarrassing). Popularity can be achieved by means other than exclusivity or recognized respectability, such as with uniqueness or extravagant activities (Tian & McKenzie, 2001). Therefore, the need for popularity will not be treated as an integral part of NfS, despite being related to it as another construct.

The results also reflect what was revealed by the in-depth interviews; social status is defined by both the motive of being recognized for abilities, actions, and contributions (which I called respectability) and the need to have access and associations with prominent and special groups (i.e., exclusivity). The marketing literature for years has been focused on the aspect of exclusivity, but respectability is not reflected at all as a parallel motive for status-seeking activities (especially those that are prosocial in nature). This could be explained because status-seeking has traditionally been linked to luxury spending, such that considering other possible manifestations (or dimensions) of status-seeking were not discernible to researchers. Nonetheless, the research on the relationship between charitable giving and NfS opened the possibility of establishing another dimension to NfS, which is one that is more concerned with respectability rather than snob appeal (Kafashan et al., 2014).

The current EFA analysis confirms what became obvious during the in-depth interviews, which is that people understand social status to mean a lot of things other than luxury possessions, such as being accomplished and admired. Although each dimension is discrete and can be used to predict different outcomes, they would both constitute the full scale for NfS because each reflects a distinct aspect of social status as an affiliative purpose (exclusivity) and as a reputational purpose (respectability). While this is the first scale to offer respectability as a second dimension for NfS, some evidence had to be provided that each sub-scale could predict different outcomes and can be related to different constructs. Therefore, the next step was to conduct a CFA, which had a threefold goal: conduct a test-retest reliability for the items, establish the construct validity of the scale by showing how related both are to existing scales and related constructs, and by showing how they could predict other attitudinal intentional outcomes. Details on the CFA are provided in the next chapter.

3.4.1: Step 5: Confirmatory factor analysis

Following the results of the EFA, 20 items retained from the previous scale pool were imported to the second survey for test-retest reliability and to measure the relationships to other subjective variables and the dependent variables. Following the same criteria described for the EFA sample, the CFA survey had about 40 items for all variables (except demographic questions); hence, a sample size larger than 400 was advisable. A total of 588 individuals ($average_{age}$ = 43.5) participated in the survey on Qualtrics, recruited via *CloudResearch*, out of which 103 had incomplete responses to some control variables, but all responses to the scale indicators were complete. Participants were compensated according to the internal terms of Amazon's *CloudResearch* service.

Like the EFA survey, a census-based quota was requested, such that the sample reflected the population diversity in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and education level. According to the service representative, the sampling pool has a larger portion of white participants, and females slightly outnumber males. Nonetheless, quotas for each ethnic group were requested such that

Table 3.4: Frequencies of demographic variables in the CFA survey

Demographic variable	N	Percentage
Age cohort		
• 18-24	82	13.9%
• 25-34	121	20.6%
• 35-44	118	20.1%
• 45-54	75	12.8%
• 55-64	76	12.9%
• 65 and above	89	15.1%
Gender		
• Male	274	46.6%
• Female	308	52.4%
• Non-binary	6	1%
Ethnicity		
• White/ Caucasian	376	63.9%
• Black/ African American	90	15.3%
• Hispanic/ Latin American	52	8.8%
• Asian	37	6.3%
• American Indian, Alaska native, or native Hawaiian	19	3.2%
• Mixed-race or other	14	2.4%
Education Level		
• High school or less	120	20.4%
• Some college or associate degree	157	26.7%
• Bachelor's degree	194	33.0%
• Master's degree or professional degree	101	17.2%
• Doctoral degree	16	2.7%
Marital status		
• Never married	232	39.5%
• Currently married	265	45.1%
• Divorced or widowed	83	14.1%
• Other (separated, engaged...)	7	1.2%
Car owner		
• No	101	17.2%
• Yes	487	82.8%
Household income level		
• Less than $25,000	92	15.6 %
• $25,000 - $49,999	149	25.3 %
• $50,000 - $74,999	117	19.9 %
• $75,000 - $99,999	88	15.0 %
• $100,000 - $149,999	77	13.1 %
• $150,000 - $199,999	41	7 %
• $200,000 - $249,999	16	2.7 %
• $250,000 or more	8	1.4 %
Political affiliation		
• Democrat/ lean Democrat	245	41.7%
• Independent/ non-partisan	178	30.3%
• Republican/ lean Republican	165	28.1%
A household member tested positive for COVID-19		
• No	398	82.1%
• Yes	87	17.9%
Lost job due to COVID-19 crisis		
• No	389	81%
• Yes	91	19%

they would be over-recruited if they fell below the specified percentage of non-white (which is 35% in the USA). A full description of the demographic characteristics of the sample is shown in Table 3.4.

After reading and agreeing to the consent form, participants proceeded to take the online questionnaire. The survey items included the generic need for status scale by Dubois et al. (2011) and the status consumption scale by Eastman et al. (1999). These two scales have been used to measure NfS and status consumption in most empirical studies reviewed in the literature. If the newly developed scale correlates with these two variables, then it is indeed closely measuring the same concept that the previous scales were trying to capture, hence establishing convergent validity.

For the dependent variables, items from several established scales were included. The attitude toward luxury scale by Dubois et al. (2005) provided items such as “all things considered, I rather like luxury” and “I could talk about luxury for hours.” Willingness to help others was measured by items borrowed from Knowles et al.’s (2012) scale for charitable intention.

Variables were measured on 7-point Likert scales. Other dependent variables included questions I developed related to attitude towards charitable spending. The items ask participants to rate the following on a 7-point semantic differential scale, e.g.: “Donating money to charity would be: Unimportant—important, Not satisfying—satisfying, pointless—worthwhile.” Some questions were developed to measure what amount participants would spend in a hypothetical scenario; I specifically asked “Assume you are offered a gift card worth $10,000. You may keep some of it in your account as long as you spend some money on a luxury product (or experience) of your choice. How much would you be willing to spend on that luxury?,” with responses ranging from 10% to 100% (or $1,000 to $100,000). Price willing to give for charity was similarly measured, but with changing the condition to "…as long as you donate a part of it to charity" and having 10 choices ranging from 10% to 100%. These two price willingness items are based on and modified from Wieseke et al. (2014).

Past spending behavior was measured for the frequency of spending on luxury by asking three indicators: "How often, in a given year, do you: buy luxury products/ pay for luxurious experiences/ spend on luxury services?," with responses ranging from "never" to "a lot" on a 5-point scale. Spending on charitable donations was measured by asking "How often have you given money to charitable organizations?," with the same range of responses. Finally, demographic information was assessed, along with questions related to COVID-19 (asking if the participant had been infected before or not) and employment status (asking if they have been unemployed or furloughed), to control for the possible impact of the presence of the pandemic on spending intentions. All survey instruments are included in the Appendix 4.

CFA is meant to test the hypothesized relations between observed variables (i.e., scores from different measures) and latent variables or factors. CFA is needed for refining measurement, such that it assesses construct validity by identifying effects and evaluating factor invariance and group differences (Jackson et al., 2009). According to suggestions (Holbert & Grill, 2015; R. Kline, 2013), the model fit should have the following indices' values to designate goodness of fit: RMSEA should be ≤ 0.6. SRMR should be ≤ 0.09 and CFI/TLI/RNI should be ≥ 0.95.

Predictive validity can be obtained by testing how well each factor predicts attitude towards luxury and attitude toward charity. Our prediction is that the need for exclusiveness is more related to the associative nature of status-seeking; hence, it will be more correlated with positive attitudes toward luxury. The need for recognition, which is related to being recognized for one's own qualities, resembles the social value of altruism (Anik et al., 2009c). Hence, I proposed the following hypotheses:

H1: A high need for exclusiveness positively predicts attitudes towards luxury.

H2: A high need for recognition positively predicts donation attitudes.

CFA using JASP software was conducted, along with SEM tests using the *Lavaan* package (Yves Rosseel, 2012) on *RStudio*. CFA was implemented to test the construct validity of the scale with the current number of factors and items. The number of factors was indicated to be two in the current analysis. The SEM was applied to measure the relationships of the current two dimensions (sub-constructs) to the other related constructs. The current analysis of this phase assessed the composite reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity of the scale.

Convergent validity refers to the notion that different scales would actually measure the same underlying construct (Carlson & Herdman, 2012). In other words, a new scale should converge on other scales that are theoretically related or supposedly measuring the same construct. Similarly, composite reliability tests if within each (sub)scale, all the items ought to measure the same construct, with a minimal degree of divergence. Convergent validity is met if the average variance extracted (AVE) of the factor is above 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Composite reliability, on the other hand, is assessed based on the internal correlations among indicators of the same factor, with a cutoff point of 0.7 per each item to be considered a satisfactory reliable scale (Straub et al., 2004). Put together, the convergence of items within each factor, and with one factor to other related constructs, is what is needed for establishing convergent validity.

Discriminant validity is the degree to which scales intended to measure specific latent variables are interchangeable with scales that measure other constructs (McCrae & Costa, 1992). That means items in one scale should not correlate with items in another scale more than they corelate to one another within the same scale. Hence, it can be assessed by examining whether items of one factor do not cross-load on other factors by values higher than the intra-factor correlations (Voorhees et al., 2016). In addition, cross-loadings should be lower than main factor loadings by at least 0.2 standardized points (Matsunaga, 2010).

There are two additional tests for discriminant validity: The square root of the AVE of a latent variable should be lower than its correlations with any other latent variable in the model and should not correlate highly with constructs that are not theoretically related (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The last test is the *heterotrait-monotrait ratio* (HTMT) of the correlations, which is, according to (Henseler et al., 2015), a score that compares the average inter-variable correlations (correlations across different constructs) to the average intra-variable correlations (correlations within the same construct). The values of HTMT have to be less than 0.85 (Voorhees et al., 2016).

Nomological validity means how related one construct is to the other latent variables in ways that are consistent with the theoretical framework. In other words, the latent variables in a scale have to predict the variables that theory has suggested should be predictable (Okazaki et al., 2010). Applying this principle to the current model, exclusiveness and respectability have to predict the dependent variables outlined in the model. Exclusiveness should predict attitude towards luxury and willingness to spend on luxury, while respectability has to predict attitude towards charitable giving and willingness to spend on charity. These hypotheses will be tested via SEM. In addition, I compared the predictive power of the newly developed subscales to the existing scales measuring NfS, which can show if they are more or less predictive than the established scales.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

jamovi software (Navarro & Foxcroft, 2018) was used for the second phase of CFA to test if the full scale can be represented by two factors. The software uses the R package for calculation and has an improved interface for analysis output. The results confirmed my findings from the EFA to show that need-for-status items are adequately accounted for by two dimensions. Table 4.1 shows the loading matrix and scale items.

Table 4.1: Items' means and factor loadings

No	Item	F1	F2	Item-scale Correlation
	Exclusiveness			
E1	I like to own products that only elite individuals can own	0.908		0.793
E3	I like brands that associate me with high-status groups	0.892		0.726
E4	I want to belong to exclusive clubs and organizations	0.905		0.794
E6	I prefer to go to places only known by unique individuals	0.750		0.819
E9	I like to travel to places visited by elite individuals	0.843		0.801
	Respectability			
D1	I like it when people adopt my recommendations		0.755	0.732
D4	I want to be perceived as a generous person		0.854	0.735
D5	I want to be considered an influential person		0.726	0.740
D6	I want my peers to look up to me		0.691	0.764
D10	I want to be perceived as a successful person		0.789	0.779

Note: Loadings below .3 suppressed (full results in Appendix 5)

The highest Eigenvalue for any factor was 7.10, and the second highest was 2.09; the third-highest factor fell below 0.01, which is an indication that the third factor was not adequate. The first factor, exclusiveness, accounted for 36.5% of the variance, while the second factor, respectability, accounted for 31.7% of the variance. The total variance explained is 68.2%, which is considered a good fit and above the average (56.6%) in behavioral sciences (Peterson, 2000). The Bartlett's test was significant with $X^2(91) = 6689$; $p < 0.001$, and the KMO test produced MSA = .947, which indicates an adequate sample size for the number of items in the test. The fitting index also reflected a good fit, with $X^2(64) = 253$; $p < .001$. The criteria used for determining the number of adequate factors were no significant cross-loadings (.32 or above), no factor loading below.5, and meeting construct reliability for each sub-scale (Kline, 2013). The pattern matrix in Table 4.1 shows that there were no factors with cross-loadings or weak-loadings within either factor. All of the items were accounted for with the two factors.

As shown in Table 4.1, each item has a higher than .70 correlation score to the average scale; therefore, the items seem to converge on measuring one latent variable. For composite reliability, the AVE scores for each of the two factors exceeded the 0.5 cutoff point, with exclusiveness AVE = .791 and Respectability AVE = .674. These scores indicate a high composite reliability. The correlation between the two factors is $r = .467$, which is within the accepted norms.

For reliability testing, there were initially 10 items per factor in the scale, but to reduce redundancy, the three items with the lowest factor loading were excluded without affecting the reliability scores. Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = .948$ for exclusiveness and $\alpha = .923$ for respectability. A score that is close to .95 can be considered too high, according to some scholars, because it indicates the existence of redundant items (Peterson, 1994). When the scale items were reduced to 5 per factor, the Cronbach's alpha became.934 for exclusiveness and .880 for respectability. The high scores reflect the homogeneity of the items, which can be observed in Table 4.2 below with full scores.

The CFA test examined the model fit of the two factors and the covariances of the scale items. The likelihood ratio test produced $X^2(34) = 88$; $p < .001$. The other approximate fit indices were as follows: CFI = 0.987, NFI = 0.979, GFI = 0.998 (good fit is > .90), SRMR = 0.036 (cutoff point is < 0.05), RMSEA = 0.052, with a lower interval of 0.039 and an upper interval of 0.066, which makes it significant at the 0.01 level. All of these indices indicate a scale with an exceptionally good fit. The two-factor covariance was = 0.52, $p < .001$. The full parameter estimates are included in Appendix 5, along with the covariance matrix for all the items.

Table 4.2: Reliability scores for scale items

Item	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Exclusiveness	**3.17**	**1.73**	**0.934**
E1	2.95	2.00	0.911
E3	3.34	1.94	0.914
E4	3.09	1.93	0.912
E6	3.16	1.90	0.937
E9	3.28	1.97	0.918
Respectability	**4.96**	**1.27**	**0.871**
D1	4.98	1.44	0.840
D4	5.52	1.69	0.837
D5	4.48	1.43	0.869
D6	5.09	1.58	0.826
D10	5.06	1.66	0.843

To further test convergent validity, I conducted SEM testing with robust error calculation to determine if the correlations with the existing scales were significant. Items from the generic need for status (NfS) scale (Dubois et al., 2011) and the status consumption (SCon) scale (Eastman et al., 1999) were included. The baseline model test had $X^2(146) = 384.95$; $p < .001$. The path model along with the parameter estimates are shown in Figure 4.1.

The model fitness indices showed CFI = 0.977, NFI = 0.964, GFI = 0.91, SRMR = 0.044, and RMSEA = 0.054, with upper interval = 0.061 and lower interval = 0.048. The correlation estimates are shown in Table 4.3 below, which shows that all correlation estimates are significant.

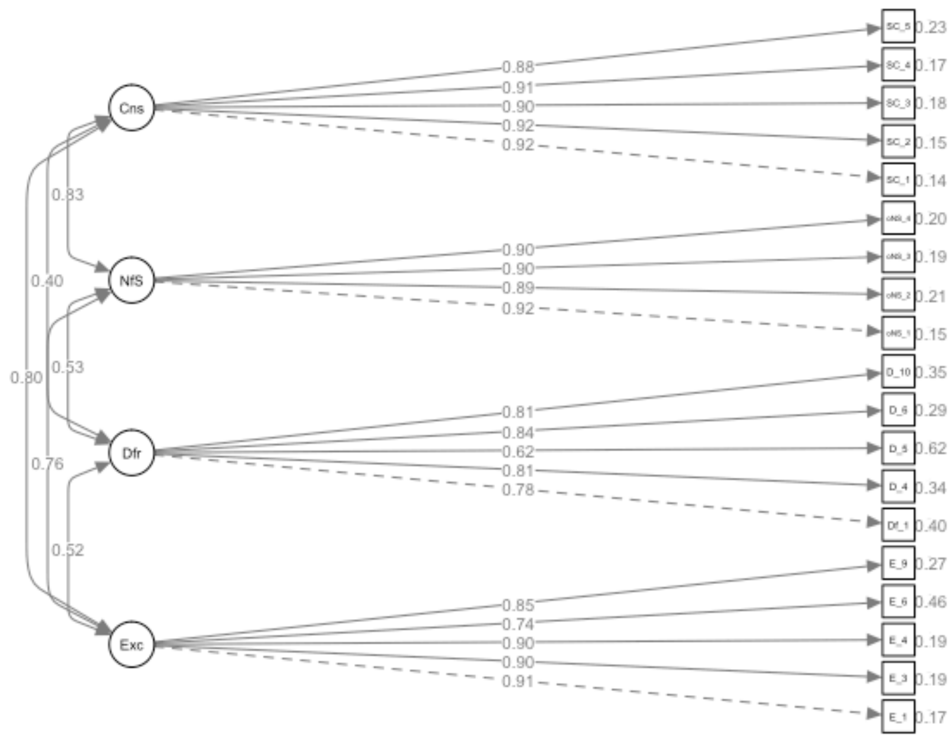


Figure 4.1: Model path for CFA analysis

Table 4.3: Correlation coefficients between each latent variable and the existing scale for status-seeking

Correlation	Estimate	SE	P-value
Exclusiveness ~~ Respectability	1.129	0.112	< .001
Exclusiveness ~~ Need for Status	2.498	0.162	< .001
Exclusiveness ~~ Status Consumption	2.702	0.176	< .001
Respectability ~~ Need for Status	1.091	0.113	< .001
Respectability ~~ Status consumption	0.861	0.112	< .001
Need for status ~~ Status consumption	2.775	0.167	< .001

To test discriminate validity, the Fornell-Larker criterion was applied to see if each factor had an internal covariance higher than 0.75; the covariance score with the other factor had to be lower than the factor's internal covariance. Exclusiveness scored 0.89, respectability scored 0.82, and the covariance score between the two was 0.48.

I examined the correlation scores of the Fornell-Larcker test with constructs not directly linked to NfS, such as the need for cognitive closure (Webster & Kruglanski, 2004). The need for cognitive closure measures the extent to which individuals prefer an orderly and organized lifestyle and avoid surprises or uncertain situations. While the generic NfS correlated with exclusiveness (ρ = .717) and respectability (ρ = .491), the need for cognitive closure has a very low covariance with exclusiveness (ρ = -0.053) and a relatively low covariance with respectability (ρ = .162).

I also asked whether the factors would have high covariances with old scales meant to measure status tendency. Exclusiveness covariance score with NfS = .71 and with SCon = .76, while respectability covariance scores with NfS = 0.491 and with SCon = 0.371. These scores show that the items, despite high correlations, can still be distinguishable (discriminated from) scales for other related constructs. Moreover, HTMT for satisfactory discriminant validity revealed that the covariance value between exclusiveness and respectability = 0.51, which is less than the recommended 0.80.

Before proceeding to test nomological validity, I examined whether any of the control variables made significant differences in the levels of the two proposed variables (exclusiveness and respectability). I conducted a series of t-tests and one-way ANOVAs on both respectability and exclusiveness across all of the control variables mentioned earlier and found a few significant differences with some variables; Table 4.4 below illustrates these results.

Only gender, employment, and subjective socioeconomic status (SES) were significant predictors of differences in exclusiveness, while being a car owner, employment, and subjective SES were significant predictors of respectability levels. Specifically, males on average had a higher exclusiveness score (M = 3.36) than females do (M = 2.99), p = .011. Those who were currently employed have a higher level of exclusiveness (M = 3.53) than those who were unemployed (M = 2.71), $p < .001$, and were also higher on respectability (M = 5.12) in comparison to the unemployed (M = 4.75), $p < .001$. Car owners were higher on respectability (M = 3.25) than non-car-owners (M = 2.79), $p = .009$.

Table 4.4: Differences in exclusiveness and respectability across some control variables

Predictor	Exclusiveness mean difference	DF	P-value	Respectability mean difference	DF	P-value
Gender (female)	0.366	552	0.011	-0.46	563	0.385
Car ownership	0.456	128	.40	-0.136	158	0. 009
Employment	-0.825	579	< .001	-0.374	546	< .001
Subjective SES:		585			585	
Lower level vs upper level	-0.555		< 0.1	-0.434		< 0.1
Middle level vs upper level	-0.931		< .001	-0.411		< .01

I conducted a Tuky's post-hoc analysis on the effect of SES on difference and exclusiveness, with SES having three levels. People who consider themselves to have a high-level SES scored higher on exclusiveness (M = 3.59) than those in the middle (M = 2.66) or lower (M = 3.04) levels, $p < .01$. Similarly, respectability was the highest among participants with a high subjective SES level (M = 5.20), then participants in the middle level (M = 4.79) or the lower level (M = 4.77), $p < .01$. Based on that, all of these variables were controlled for when I investigated the relationship of exclusiveness and respectability to other variables.

Nomological validity was tested by SEM using *RStudio's Lavaan* package. As suggested in the hypotheses, exclusiveness was expected to have a positive effect on attitude towards luxury consumption, while respectability was expected to have a positive effect on attitude towards charitable giving. I tested the effects of exclusiveness on two variables: attitude towards luxury and level of reported luxury spending (on products, services, or experiences). The effects of respectability were tested on attitude towards helping charities and reported frequency of charitable giving. Primarily, the direct effects were tested, and all were found to be significant. Table 4.5 below shows the path estimates and significance level for each prediction.

Table 4.5: SEM path models

Path	Est.	Std. err	T-Value	R^2
Exclusiveness → Luxury attitude	0.61	0.035	17.238***	0.56
Exclusiveness → Luxury spending Frequency	0.27	0.031	17.471***	0.46
Exclusiveness → Luxury attitude > luxury spending frequency (total)	0.26	0.020	13.129***	0.43
Respectability → Charity attitude	0.24	0.055	4.403***	0.04
Respectability → Giving frequency	0.17	0.041	4.187***	0.03
Respectability → Charity attitude > Giving frequency (total)	0.17	0.039	4.342***	0.16

**** significant at 0.001 level*

In accordance with the hypothesis, exclusiveness has a positive effect on luxury attitude, $t = 17.24$; $p < .001$, and on reported frequency of luxury spending; $t = 17.24$, $p < .001$. On the other hand, respectability has a positive, albeit small, effect on attitude toward charitable activities, $t = 4.4$, $p < .001$, and on reported frequency of charitable giving; $t = 4.19$; $p < .001$.

Moreover, I tested one mediation model for each latent variable to illustrate how stable the predictions of each hypothesis were. I tested whether luxury attitude mediates the effect of exclusiveness on luxury-spending frequency, and the results were positive. In addition, I tested whether attitude towards charity mediates the effect of respectability on frequency of charitable giving, and the results were positive, as shown in Table 4.6. All of these results confirm the nomological validity of the proposed scale.

The fitness indices also confirmed the strength of the statistical relationships. All of the paths have highly significant fitness scores on all measures, except for one path (respectability → giving frequency) which has a non-significant chi-square. Nonetheless, when this relationship was tested in the mediation model, even the chi-square score became highly significant. The fit indices are provided in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Fitness measures for the path models

Model	NFI	CFI	GFI	SRMR	Chi^2
CFA	0.962	0.975	0.910	0.046	410.149***
Exclusiveness > Luxury attitude	0.983	0.988	0.973	0.026	57.809***
Exclusiveness > Luxury spending frequency	0.989	0.993	0.980	0.048	44.716***
Exclusiveness > Luxury attitude -> Luxury spending frequency	0.975	0.982	0.962	0.027	92.122***
Respectability > Attitude towards helping charity	0.981	0.971	0.979	0.048	50.514***
Respectability > Giving frequency	0.990	0.996	0.992	0.018	14.538$^{(n.s.)}$
Respectability > Helping attitude > Giving frequency	0.979	0.988	0.979	0.044	56.768***

**** significant at 0.001 level*

Additional analyses were conducted to establish the robustness of the proposed factors on the dependent variables. Particularly, three sets of testing were executed: trying alternative paths for the dependent variables (aside from the main hypotheses), checking whether income level is a confound variable that might mitigate the effects on the dependent variables, and comparing the performance of the proposed scale to the existing scales' performance, particularly to check how they fare in terms of predictive ability.

In Table 4.6, the results of the alternative paths are shown, which are testing: (1) the effects of exclusiveness on charity attitude and on giving frequency, and (2) the effects of respectability on luxury attitude and frequency of luxury spending. Results show that exclusiveness has a significant effect on charity attitude and frequency of charitable giving, but the effect size and magnitude were small (r^2 = .01 and.02 respectively). Interestingly, exclusiveness has a negative impact on charity attitude, but a positive impact on giving frequency. Respectability also has a significantly positive effect on luxury attitude and frequency of luxury spending, with a relatively larger effect size (r^2 = .24 and.17 respectively). Those results affirm the position that both factors ought to be considered two dimensions of the same scale, because they together can be strong predictors of spending behavior.

Table 4.7: SEM paths for alternative models

Path	Coefficient	Std. error	T-Value	R^2
Exclusiveness → Charity attitude	-0.16	0.108	9.732***	0.01
Exclusiveness → Giving frequency	0.07	0.025	2.828**	0.02
Respectability → Luxury attitude	0.18	0.058	3.076**	0.24
Respectability → Luxury spending frequency	0.35	0.038	9.32***	0.17

*** significant at 0.01 level; *** significant at 0.001 level*

Second, to control for the effects of income levels on spending intentions, two approaches were followed: first, the reported level of income was included in the hypothesized SEM models as a control variable, and then I tested the effects of the proposed factors on willingness to spend in a hypothetical scenario. Recall that participants were asked what percentage they would be willing to spend on (luxury/charity) if they were given a sum of money. I ran mediation models (with bootstraps = 1000) with exclusiveness as a predictor for luxury attitude and spending, respectability as a predictor for charity attitude and spending, and income level as a control variable.

My results (Table 4.7) show that, even when adjusting for income, exclusiveness remained a significant predictor of reported luxury spending, with direct effects $t = 8.64$, $p < .001$, LI = .248, and UI = .439, and indirect effects $t = 18.24$, $p < .001$, LI = .520, and UI = .667. That is, even when income appeared to be a predictor of frequency of luxury spending, $t = 4.07$, $p < 0.001$, LI = 0.036, and UI = 0.103. Similarly, respectability was a significant predictor of charitable-giving frequency, with direct effects $t = 2.28$, $p = 0.23$, LI = 0.017, UI = 0.167, and indirect effects $t = 3.84$, $p < .001$, LI = 0.067, UI = 0.228. Income was also a predictor of charitable-giving frequency: $t = 4.037$, $p < .001$, LI = 0.053, UI = 0.150.

As for testing the effects on willingness to spend under a hypothetical scenario, the same mediation models were executed, but dependent variables were changed. Exclusiveness was a predictor of willingness to spend on luxury, with direct effects becoming significant, $t = 2.85$, $p = .004$, LI = 0.043, and UI = 0.252, as well as the indirect effects $t = 5.40$, $p < .001$, LI = 0.119, and UI = 0.265. Income did not have a significant effect on willingness to spend on luxury purchases: $t = 1.283$, $p = 0.199$, LI = -30.306, and UI = 171.848.

Respectability was similarly a significant predictor of willingness to give to charity, but only with indirect effects: $t = 2.85$, $p =.004$, LI = 0.013, and UI = 0.078. Direct effects became insignificant: $t = 1.20$, $p =.234$, LI = -0.043, and UI = 0.143, indicating that attitude towards charity fully mediated the effects. Income had a significant effect on willingness to give: $t = 2.29$, $p = .022$, LI = 1.99, and UI = 26.12. This indicates that higher-income people are willing to give more to charity, probably because their idea of what constitutes a large or small donation is different. These results show that the hypothesized effects of exclusiveness and respectability are stable across different tests and measurements. The path models are shown in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 below (graphs by JASP package). The full results and figures are included in the appendices.

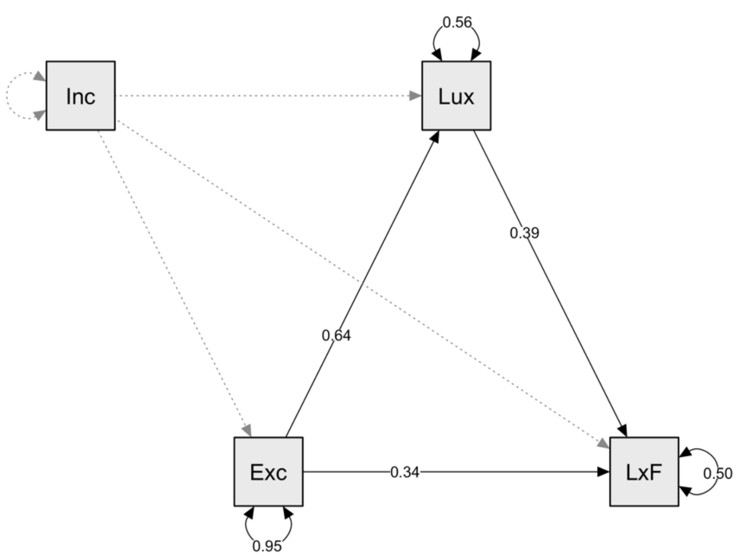


Figure 4.2: Effect of exclusiveness on luxury-spending frequency, with income as a confounder

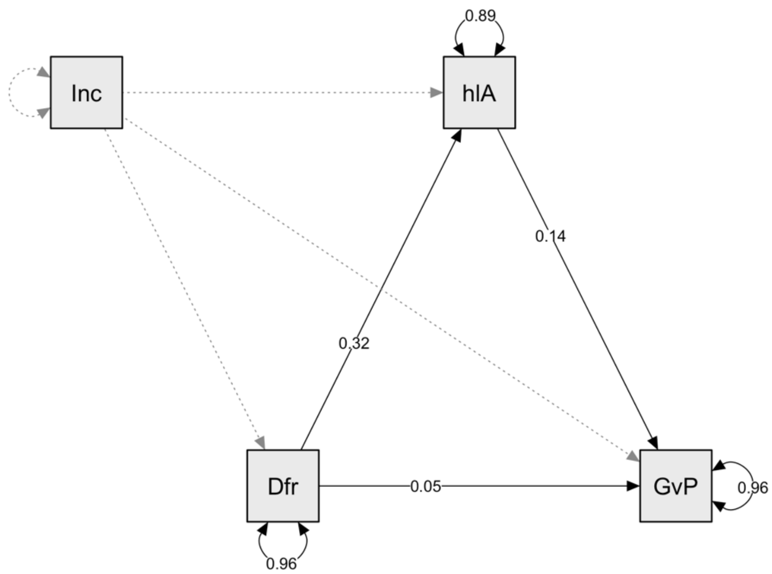


Figure 4.3: Effect of respectability on charitable-giving frequency, with income as a confounder

Third, I investigated whether exclusiveness and respectability would be better predictors than the generic need for status scale and the status consumption scale. The comparison between exclusiveness and respectability was made in terms of percent of variance explained and effect size. The generic need for status scale, status consumption scale, exclusiveness, and respectability scales were tested as predictors for frequency of luxury purchases and frequency of charitable giving. Using a robust SEM method, the results of the regression analysis are shown below in Table 4.8.

Results show that only respectability is a positive predictor of giving frequency; none of the other variables had any significant effect. As for luxury-purchase frequency, exclusiveness and status consumption were both positive predictors. However, when comparing the explained variance between these two variables, exclusiveness' effect on luxury-purchase frequency was $r^2 = .31$, whereas the explained variance by status consumption scale was $r^2 = .28$. These results demonstrate the added value of the proposed scale to the potential models on spending. The two proposed variables can predict not only luxury spending but also charitable spending, which the other scales failed to account for. The full model is illustrated in Figure 4.4.

Table 4.8: Comparing regression results for different scales of status seeking

	Estimate	Std. Err	t-value	P-value
Giving Frequency ←				
Exclusiveness	0.051	0.052	0.981	0.327
Respectability	0.186	0.054	3.431	0.001
Generic NfS	-0.104	0.059	-1.175	0.076
Status Consumption	0.042	0.057	0.738	0.461
Luxury Purchase Frequency ←				
Exclusiveness	0.119	0.036	3.292	0.001
Respectability	-0.016	0.032	-0.495	0.621
Generic NfS	0.036	0.033	1.104	0.270
Status Consumption	0.144	0.042	3.475	0.001

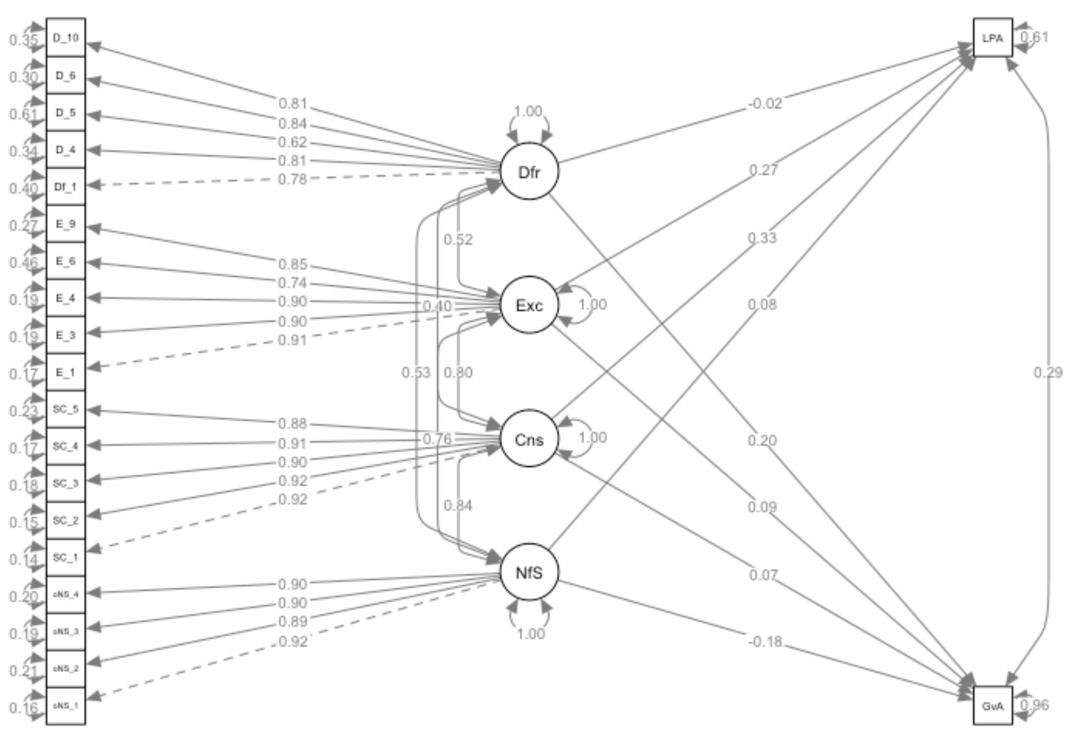


Figure 4.4: The effects of different scales of status-seeking on giving intention and luxury-spending intention

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This research had two main objectives: to redefine NfS as a concept variable, which emphasizes the breadth of the concept and its applicability to different domains within consumer behavior, and to propose and test a reliable scale that captures the dimensions of NfS and offers predictive power in outcome variables besides luxury spending.

Based on those goals, my theoretical and empirical research located two distinct, yet related, dimensions of NfS: the exclusiveness motive and the respectability motive. The exclusiveness dimension is the one that has been the focus of marketing research on luxury consumption, since it describes the need to be distinguished as someone with more money and/or better taste. However, when I coupled the theories from the marketing literature with that of evolutionary psychology on the evolution and function of social status, I realized that being in an exclusive minority (or ahead of the pack) is the driver for much of the veneration towards luxury purchases. The empirical findings have indeed confirmed the proposition that exclusiveness is linked to the desire for luxury, not only in terms of attitude, but also in terms of past and intended future behavior.

The dimension that has usually been unnoticed and uncredited, however, is the respectability motive, or the need for respectfulness and being highly regarded by others. As we have seen with the anthropological, sociological, and psychological research on magnanimity and charitable giving, it has always been assumed that generosity is linked to status-seeking (at least at some level). What has been understudied, however, is whether the status motivation for luxury spending is different from the motivation for charitable spending. Hence, the second dimension proposed in my scale aimed to capture the motive for prosocial behavior that is linked to seeking social status. Indeed, the researcher realized during the qualitative research phase that for almost all participants, social status was more about the behavior and reputation one projects via their behavior, rather than what they own or wear. Therefore, a full scale on the need for social status ought to include items that capture this dimension of prestige, which can be a motive for prosocial behavior.

This addition proved to be useful when the quantitative study was launched and analyzed; no past scale was able to predict attitude towards charity and charitable behavioral intentions better than the difference factor, not sure what the difference factor means. The generic need for status scale and the status consumption scale did not predict the attitude towards helping others or the frequency of charitable giving. In fact, even exclusiveness was a better predictor of charitable attitude than either of the previously established scales. The dimensions and items of this scale have gone through a rigorous process of scale development, and it was found that it withstood the stages of EFA and CFA. The high reliability and fitness indices, and the nomological validity that has been revealed with the data analysis, are witnesses to the quality of the scale's wording and theoretical soundness.

Elaborating more on the nomological validity of the scale, I tried different tests to show the theoretical relations and predictive ability of the proposed factors. All of the tests I tried rendered positive results; whether I looked at linear correlations, regression, structural equation modeling, or mediation models, all tests show significant relationships between the two factors of exclusiveness and respectability on one hand, and the dependent variables related to status consumption and charitable spending on the other hand. My analysis showed that even when controlling for several demographic variables and personality variables, the effects of respectability and exclusiveness remain significant.

I must mention, however, that the effects of respectability on charitable outcomes are smaller than the effects of respectability on luxury-spending outcomes. This can be explained by the fact that charitable behavior has many multiple facets to its motivation and action, such that a simple personality factor will not cover the depth of the phenomenon of giving. As charity is typically an altruistic behavior, the levels of empathy, identification with others, and moral values will all shape one’s sense of responsibility towards helping others in society. In addition, there are other layers of cultural factors (e.g., collectivism versus individualism) and economic factors (e.g. disposable income and economic anxiety) that affect one’s giving behavior. Part of these effects could be accounted for with the demographic indicators related to income level and perceived SES, but other direct indicators could also be useful. Nonetheless, the purpose of the analysis was to show how respectability can predict charitable outcomes, which has been achieved.

To the best of my knowledge, no researcher has treated NfS as a multidimensional scale, despite the acknowledgement that status itself can take different forms and can be achieved via different means. For instance, Johnson et al. (2007) proposed that status can be achieved via two means. The first is dominance, which is about achieving status via force or power, in terms of physical power and authority. The second is prestige, which is to attain status via impression management, or the subtle power of attraction and expertise. Considering how the current findings add up with this framework, I found that prestige can be materialized as being perceived as someone who can afford things other cannot afford, or as someone who possesses desirable qualities and displays exemplary behavior. In this sense, the current scale achieves the intended objective: to capture the dimensions of social society as it pertains to consumer behavior.

Nonetheless, other types of status, such as occupational status, organizational status, economic status (as defined by money), and power status, are more a reflection of dominance. Therefore, the conditions and factors related to achieving them will fall outside the purview of the current scale. Having said that, the current findings can be used as a basis for developing a theoretical framework for dominance-based status.

Prestige can be defined as the reputation and popular esteem that is derived from characteristics and achievements, or from associations (Hargreaves, 2009), and the full proposed scale measures how those aspects of prestige motivate people to make decisions. The current scale did not ask people directly about what motivates them to spend or donate, since that can be susceptible to multiple biases, such as social desirability or attribution bias. Rather, asking about what outcomes people see as desirable and important reflected the intrapersonal motives that can then be linked to the observed pattern of behavior by the participants.

One advantage of the current study was that I used multiple measures and constructs to assess the impact of exclusiveness and respectability on spending behavior. Not only did I ask people how frequently they spend on luxury or charity, or how they feel about spending on luxuries or charitably, but I asked even in a hypothetical scenario how many people are willing to give to charity or spend on a preferred luxury item. Testing different outcomes linked to spending allowed me to examine whether the effects of NfS are just attitudinal, or whether their effects can be detected in actual and expressed behavior.

The findings of this study confirmed the assumptions that NfS shapes people's attitudes towards what is socially important (luxury or charity), and how they would behave if they were given the financial means. One interesting fact was that the level of income did not affect attitude towards luxury or the reported frequency of luxury purchasing, but it did affect the intention of charitable giving. Regardless of income's effect, however, either respectability or exclusiveness would still be significant predictors of the dependent variable. This confirms the assumption that those status motives are fundamental and are strongly operative across different situations and variability among individuals.

Finally, there were a couple of interesting findings that require further investigation. First, the intention to engage in publicized giving or giving to charity with the promise of being mentioned on social media could be affected by both exclusiveness and respectability. Donating money can be a sign of exclusiveness, indicating that someone has the financial resources to support the causes they care about, as opposed to others who are constrained by finances and social situations. Similarly, being known as a charitable person can also enhance a person's reputation as being generous and caring. Hence, both factors can be effective in making people more willing to give to charity if their donation will be publicized. Nonetheless, the conditions under which each factor would become more effective are yet to be investigated.

Second, the portion of money donated hypothetically was predicted by the interaction of exclusiveness and respectability. People who are high in both traits expressed willingness to donate a larger portion of the money they were given to charity. That could be interpreted as meaning that respectability can encourage willingness to donate overall, but exclusiveness would push people to donate more, probably to indicate an exclusive edge. This suggests that both factors may interact in important ways to shape behavioral decisions.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE STUDIES

6.1: Contributions of the study

There are four main theoretical contributions the current study makes. First, the study produced an improved scale for NfS, which followed the foundational rules for scale development (Churchill, 1979), supplemented by adopting the refined guidelines for EFA and CFA that have emerged following years of advancement in methodological research and scale construction (Carpenter, 2018; Costello & Osborne, 2005; Kline, 2013). One major problem with previous scales was that the operational definition of the need-for-status construct was not clearly reflective of the theoretical definition. The previous scale items enjoyed internal reliability and construct validity, but some aspects of external validity were missing as the scales were not capturing the full picture of what a "status motive" might mean to people. In this study I worked to ensure that all face, construct, convergent, discriminant, and nomological validities are demonstrated for the current scale.

Second, this is the first study to propose a secondary dimension to NfS, a dimension I called "respectability." This addition is a departure from the majority of studies in marketing that emphasized how status-seeking is a form of signaling an affiliation with higher groups and dissociation from low-status groups (Geiger-Oneto et al., 2013; Han et al., 2010a). Nevertheless, the notion of having a prosocial component of status-seeking has been presumed by many scholars in different fields of behavioral sciences (Kafashan et al., 2014; Yip & Kelly, 2013). However, the notion had not been explicated and developed theoretically and empirically before the current study. Having a bi-dimensional need for status scale was not only meant to be used for predicting spending intentions, but more importantly, it was developed to achieve a more accurate description of the manifestation of the status motive among individuals and to reflect what status means by the majority of people within society.

Third, the study uncovered new relationships about the effect of status motive on spending intentions and behavior. Previous studies have already demonstrated how NfS increases purchase intentions for luxury products (Chan et al., 2015; Han et al., 2010b) or preferences for status goods (Gao et al., 2016). The precise relationship between the frequency of luxury spending (inclusive of products, services, and experiences) and NfS (as it is directly measured; not inferred) has not been reported before. This study was able to show a positive relationship between exclusiveness and spending frequency, in addition to precisely predicting whether the intention to increase the amount of luxury spending will increase with an increase in exclusiveness. The unique approach of the study was that it demonstrated strong and consistent statistical relationships between the scale factors and spending in terms of intention, recollection, and willingness to spend. Therefore, the relationship is evidently stronger and is not distorted by situational factors or biases attributed to the wording of the dependent-variable items. In addition, the study proposed attitude towards luxury as a mediator for the relationship between NfS and luxury spending, which can be a basis for developing a full theoretical model for status consumption.

Fourth, the study clarified how NfS can lead to prosocial behavior if it is solely based on self-status advancement. We were able to distinguish between how attitude towards charity, charity frequency, and willingness to spend on charity were predicted by respectability or an interaction between respectability and exclusiveness. All previous scales failed to predict whether charitable-giving intention changes with a change in NfS. One gap in the current literature is that it does not explain the typology, or the conditions, by which NfS would lead to egoistic or altruistic spending behavior. The current study offers a typology that can predict which dimension of the status motive would contribute to an increase in charitable intention and behavior .

Conducting this study with a nationally representative example also allowed us to control for demographic variables. We found that females tended to be slightly more charitable than males, but respectability remained a significant predictor even after all the control variables were accounted for. Hopefully, this contribution lays ground for new research that investigates the motive of donating online, or the amenability to various donation appeals. Having developed parameters for those who are more inclined towards luxury spending, charitable spending, or both, researchers can test different models of what messages, materials, or incentives can affect the spending behavior of consumers.

6.2: Managerial implications and applications

The findings of the current study offer practical implications for advertising and marketing communication practitioners. First, the appeal of luxury brands is now more understood as a function of exclusivity; brands that are only affordable by the few, and places that can be visited by a selected minority, would be more attractive to people with a higher need for status. This implies that the branding strategies of luxury marketers should focus on how the consumers or followers of the brand are different from other people. This strategy has already been adopted by a few brands, such as the infamous 1997 Apple ad "*Think Different"* (viewable on YouTube: *jeremytai, 2013)*.

Advertisers should also emphasize how the product is exclusive, such that it is a unique choice, and targeted only at those who are "worth it" (Haig, 2006). This exclusivity appeal has the advantage of attracting people who are attached to luxury and are more willing to spend on services and products that represent luxury. Interestingly, when services and products of a certain brand cease to be exclusive, they may well become less appealing for status-seeking consumers. How can luxury brands increase their market share without losing an important component of their brand value? One can assume that having different lines within the brands or starting more exclusive extensions can help in attracting the high-value unique consumers, while also expanding to other consumer segments.

Second, the relationship between the desire for respectability and respect from others ought to be used as a messaging appeal by social marketers. Donation appeals that emphasize how the organization's patrons are all knowledgeable, influential, and successful can increase the donation returns by audiences. Charitable giving can be affected by complex techniques of inciting empathy and moral elevation, but my findings also suggest that role-model ideas also influence charitable-giving frequency. Therefore, prosocial campaigns that emphasize personal benefits to an individual's self-esteem or self-conception will be fruitful with people motivated by seeking respectability from others.

Third, the question of how social media can be used for soliciting donations is relevant to this study, such that honorable mentions of a person's name can motivate donation (or a larger donation) to charity. This technique, however, ought to be composed of a mixture of exclusiveness and respectability appeals that emphasize how becoming a donor would associate the person with a highly selective group, but also that it is the respect-eliciting and honorable thing to do. These techniques can be tried by non-profit organizations that have prestigious reputations, such as public radio stations, museums, symphonies, conservatories, etc., which are associated with exclusive elites but are also markers of sophistication and civic generosity.

Last, the study also discovered an association between respectability and luxury spending frequency. This linkage can be used by brands that not only emphasize exclusivity, but also signal social value and cultural differentiation. As mentioned before, brands and restaurants that serve organic food are more appealing to people who are high in NfS, but how can that be utilized by advertisers? One answer could be that the class of brands that combine a cause-related mission (e.g. using organic food, eco-friendly materials, or locally sourced ingredients) can create messages that combine exclusivity with social respectability themes. Advertisers can show that what is luxurious is also what is socially beneficial, emphasize how consuming its products or services contributes to the perception of one's generosity and accomplishment, and how it is a ticket to join an exclusive club of those who understand and care about major issues facing society. Traces of this type of messaging are apparent in the marketing of brands such as Whole Foods Market and Tom's Shoes. Thus, the combination of luxury and respectability motives can be a powerful combined tool for marketing and fundraising.

6.3: Limitations and future studies

There are several limitations to this study. First, the study does not claim to offer causal explanations; it merely reflected associations between status motives and spending behavior and attitudes. The study in its current form does not explain whether spending habits are actually the cause for the level of exclusiveness and respectability. It does not also explain the full mechanism by which the level of NfS affects spending intentions on luxury or charity. An experimental study is needed to test whether exclusivity appeals do indeed affect luxury-spending intentions and whether respectability appeals affect charitable-spending intentions. A future experiment that examines the interaction between personality traits and status-motive manipulation can potentially show a causal relationship and is a project that advertising scholars ought to consider.

Second, the study did not account for all the variables that affect luxury spending. Previous studies have noted that cultural differences, such as intercultural power-distance beliefs, affect the desire for and intentions to buy luxury products (Gao et al., 2016). Other studies also pointed out how individual differences between those with self-oriented self-construal and those with other-oriented self-construal affect charitable attitude and behavior (Duclos & Barasch, 2014). In addition, the study did not account for how situational factors, such as mood, affect, and cognitive load, might influence attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. Of course, the main purpose of this study was neither to offer a full model on spending decision-making, nor to identify all antecedents for charitable giving. Rather, it was only about demonstrating a strong link between status motives and spending behavior, which it was successful in achieving. Nonetheless, future studies can examine how the emotional appeals attached to status would affect the persuasiveness of spending ads or the volume of spending related to luxury and charitable spending.

Third, the study results are limited to a US sample; therefore, the indicators cannot be generalized to the global audience. My position is that the dimensions uncovered in this study would have some level of global applicability, since the rationale behind them was not only linked to observation and cross-sectional data, but also to a thorough review of literature in anthropology, sociology, psychology, advertising and marketing, some of which was conducted with global or cross-cultural samples. The items and wordings in the current scale are unique to the English language and American culture; therefore, scales intended for societies other than the

US ought to have modified, altered, or even brand-new items. However, the current scale can be a useful basis for creating another culturally specific scale.

Last, the scale did not account for all possible outcomes associated with NfS. Previous studies have shown that status motive is associated with preferring organic food, driving eco-friendly cars, or buying authentic products over imitative or counterfeit ones. This limitation was caused by the restriction of the number of items needed for the CFA, such that a larger number of items would require a higher number of participants. In addition, long surveys tend to lower the quality of responses, as noted by many methodologists and researchers experienced in surveys (Krosnick, 2018). Being the first study to test the scale, the goal was to establish a base level of construct validity, but further validation of the scale actually comes from repeated studies that demonstrate its stability and effectiveness in capturing the meaning of the construct and predicting the theoretically related outcomes. Therefore, I encourage future researchers to use the scale and test it on different outcomes related to different forms of spending or charitable behavior that is not necessarily about money. Some specific areas communication researchers can look into are how this scale can explain and predict sharing behavior online, or the tendency to post content online and spend time with followers (Park et al., 2017). NfS could be a strong motive for such behavior, but it would be interesting to see which dimension would predict knowledge-sharing behavior.

6.4: Conclusion

The current study is the product of a long-held desire to find a proper scale that can predict how different consumers receive and react to luxury advertising. I established via a detailed account of the qualitative research, pilot study, EFA survey, and CFA survey how scale came into being, what decisions I made, and for what reasons. The data analysis used different methods and exhausted multiple explanations and alternative hypotheses to account for any confounds or spurious relationships. I also acknowledge that the current scale is only a stepping stone to further research on the relationship between status and marketing communication. The scope of the questions asked, and the size and composition of the sample, contributed greatly to the coherence and consistency of the results. My hope is that this project will be an example for future social scientists interested in scale development and researchers who study luxury branding, social marketing, status advertising, and destination marketing. Future developments and refinements of this scale ought to be expected, and even encouraged.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Pilot test materials

Initial pool of scale items:

1. I like to cut off my associations with people who will harm my status
2. I like it when people acknowledge my generosity
3. I feel helping others enhances my social status
4. I want to be perceived as a creative person
5. I want to be perceived as a generous person
6. I behave in ways that enhance my status
7. I care about my reputation whenever I make any choice
8. I like to be recognized when I volunteer or help others
9. I like my activities to make me distinguishable from the average person
10. I like to be seen as someone with a high taste
11. I want to be recognized as an accomplished person
12. I like to be perceived as a sophisticated person
13. I desire to increase my position in the social hierarchy
14. I believe status comes with having the most connections
15. I do not like to be considered just average
16. I think public recognition is an important motive for my actions
17. I like to be viewed as being of a higher status than others
18. I want to improve my social standing as compared to others
19. I like to increase my position in the social hierarchy
20. I am not concerned with social status R
21. I think seeking prestige is a waste of time R
22. I consider climbing the social ladder a priority for me
23. I want to be perceived as someone who belongs to the top
24. I want people of high prestige to accept me
25. I like to do things that only elite individuals can do
26. I need to belong to exclusive clubs or organizations
27. I prefer to do activities that are not shared by the mainstream
28. I prefer, when I go out, a place that only unique individuals know about
29. I believe I should belong to the top strata of society
30. I work to be recognized by the top individuals in my field of work
31. I want to be respected by influential people
32. I want to gain the admiration by important individuals in the community
33. I like it if special individuals consider me one of them
34. I want to gain access to influential people
35. I like to be invited to exclusive parties
36. I like to hang out with peers who are popular
37. I like to be part of a selected few who know things that others do not know
38. I don't like to hang out with people who are just average
39. I like products that make me feel confident
40. I prefer brands that associate me with high-status groups
41. I like to own products that only elite individuals can own
42. I care about my appearance only when I am trying to impress a special person
43. I like wearing things that only people in the know" know about their value

44. I want to be perceived as unique among my peers
45. I care about my appearance, even when I do not need to impress anyone
46. I need to feel special in whenever I dress out
47. I prefer brands that make me feel unique
48. I sometimes purchase things to prove to myself that I am unique
49. I do not care about price, if what I am buying will make me popular
50. I want to own things that convey how unique I am
51. I like to stand out in my field of work
52. I like to stand out by my achievements
53. I like people to perceive me as powerful
54. I want to be perceived as knowledgeable about the areas I care about
55. I like it when others seek my advice
56. I want to influence people around me
57. I like it when my friends ask me about issues important to them
58. I feel great when my friends consult me about what they should wear or buy
59. I like to see my advice being adopted by others around me
60. I like to be perceived as an expert in my field
61. I like to feel that I know things better than others
62. I like to find that my influence on others is acknowledged
63. I like to see my influence on others
64. I want to feel that I can do things that others cannot do
65. I want to feel that I can own things that others cannot own
66. I need to feel I am competent
67. I want others to applaud my skills
68. I need to feel that I have extraordinary qualities
69. I like volunteering or donating when that makes me feel special
70. I want others to think I have superior qualities
71. I want to be viewed as a popular person
72. I like it when people pay attention to me when I enter a room
73. I like to be the center of attention
74. I like my physical appearance to stand out
75. I need to be admired by others
76. I feel seeking popularity is useless R
77. I want to be considered an influential person
78. I want to be perceived as someone who is successful
79. I need to feel that people look up to me
80. I need to feel that what I do makes me popular
81. I want my achievements to be recognized
82. I like everyone to see my achievements
83. I want to be treated as a VIP
84. I want to be considered a “cool” person

Table A1.1: Total variance explained for the pilot survey

Factor	**Initial Eigenvalues**	**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**					
Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
1	9.004	60.026	60.026	8.686	57.905	57.905	7.944
2	1.611	10.737	70.763	1.279	8.525	66.43	7.082
3	0.646	4.31	75.073				
4	0.617	4.116	79.188				
5	0.476	3.173	82.362				
6	0.442	2.944	85.306				
7	0.337	2.248	87.554				
8	0.327	2.181	89.736				
9	0.296	1.972	91.708				
10	0.283	1.887	93.595				
11	0.263	1.756	95.351				
12	0.226	1.509	96.86				
13	0.184	1.227	98.088				
14	0.172	1.143	99.231				
15	0.115	0.769	100				

Extraction Method: PAF. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Table A1.2.1: Pilot survey statistical tests: Correlation matrix between the two factors in the pilot survey

Factor	**1**	**2**
1	1.000	.692
2	.692	1.000

Table A1.2.2: Pilot survey statistical tests: KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		**.946**
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2586.719
	Df	105
	Sig.	.000

APPENDIX 2: EFA survey materials

Demographic questions:
What is your gender?
  Male
  Female
  Non-binary/ Not listed…

Age (In numbers): ___________________

Please identify your ethnic identity:
  White/ Caucasian
  Black or African American
  Hispanic or Latino
  Native American or Alaska Native
  East, South, or Southeast Asian
  Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islander
  Not listed (please specify) ____________

Level of education:
  High school diploma or less
  Some college, or associate degree
  Bachelor's degree
  Master's degree or professional degree (J.D., D.D.S., M.D.,...)
  Ph.D.

Your total household income:
  Less than $25,000
  $25,000 – $49,999
  $50,000 – $74,999
  $75,000 – $99,999
  $100,000 – $124,999
  $125,000 - $149,999
  $150,000 - $174,999
  $175,000 - $199,999
  $200,000 - $224,999
  $225,000 - $249,999
  $250,000 or more

Current Employment status:
  Full-time
  Part-time
  Self-employed or other
  Temporarily unemployed
  Long-term unemployed (26 weeks or longer)

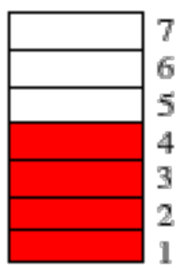
Student
Retired

Which option best describes your current living situation?
Living with parents/guardians or relatives
Rent
Own/ Co-own
Other (please specify) ____________

Do you own a car?
No
Yes

Subjective socioeconomic status:
Think of the ladder below as representing where people stand in our society. At the top are the people who are the best off: who have the most money, most education, and best jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off: who have the least money, least education, and worst jobs or no job.

Place the marker on the rung (out of 7) that best represents where you think you stand on the ladder.



Marital status:
Never married
Currently married
Previously married (widowed, divorced)
Other (…)

Do you have children?
No
Yes

Additional EFA survey items

Table A2.1: Exclusiveness and reliability items

Item number	Item statement
Exclusiveness_1	I like to own products that only elite individuals can own
Exclusiveness_2	I like to wear clothes that are only recognized by trendy consumers
Exclusiveness_3	I like brands that associate me with high-status groups
Exclusiveness_4	I want to have club and group memberships where I can connect with top individuals
Exclusiveness_5	I want to belong to exclusive clubs and organizations
Exclusiveness_6	I like to be invited to exclusive parties and events
Exclusiveness_7	I like to be viewed as being of a higher status than others
Exclusiveness_8	I want to do things that only top individuals can do
Exclusiveness_9	I prefer to go to places only known by unique individuals
Exclusiveness_10	I like to belong in the top strata of society
Exclusiveness_11	I prefer to be associated with people who are above average
Exclusiveness_12	I like to enjoy travel experiences only known by a selected few
Exclusiveness_13	I like to travel to places visited by elite individuals
Exclusiveness_14	I prefer groups that have a limited number of memberships
Exclusiveness_15	I want to seat with the VIP section at sporting events
Exclusiveness_16	I want to go to restaurants with hard-to-get reservations
Exclusiveness_17	I want to be able to have exclusive seats at concerts and shows
Respectability_1	I like it when people adopt my recommendations
Respectability_2	I like it when others seek my advice
Respectability_3	I like it when people acknowledge my kindness
Respectability_4	I need others to think I have superior qualities
Respectability_5	I want to be considered an influential person
Respectability_6	I want to be recognized by the top individuals in my field of work
Respectability_7	I want to be admired by others
Respectability_8	I want to be popular among my peers
Respectability_9	I want my peers to look up to me
Respectability_10	I like to do activities that make me popular
Respectability_11	I want to be viewed as a “hip” person
Respectability_12	I want to be perceived as a generous person
Respectability_13	I like it when my friends ask me about issues important to them
Respectability_14	I want my achievements to be publicly recognized
Respectability_15	I want to be recognized as an accomplished person
Respectability_16	I want to be perceived as a creative person
Respectability_17	I like to be perceived as an expert in my field
Respectability_18	I want to be perceived as a successful person
Respectability_19	I like to be perceived as a sophisticated person
Respectability_20	I want others to applaud my skills
Respectability_21	I want to be viewed as a popular person

APPENDIX 3: EFA survey results

Table A3.1: EFA analysis results

Indicator	F1	F2
I like to own products that only elite individuals can own	0.987	
I like wearing things that only “people in the know” know about them	0.932	
I prefer brands that associate me with high-status groups	0.893	
I need to belong to exclusive clubs or organizations	0.878	
I like to be viewed as being of a higher status than others	0.751	
I like to do things that only elite individuals can do	0.682	
I prefer, when I go out, a place that only unique individuals know	0.675	
I want to be perceived as a successful person		0.892
I like to see my advice being adopted by others around me		0.832
I want others to applaud my skills		0.776
I like it when people acknowledge my generosity		0.734
I want others to think I have superior qualities		0.644
I want to be considered an influential person		0.632
I work to be recognized by the top individuals in my field of work		0.618

Table A3.2.1: Exclusiveness scale reliability analysis: Statistics

	Mean	**SD**	**Cronbach's α**
scale	3.22	1.61	0.953

Table: A3.2.2: Exclusiveness scale reliability analysis: Item reliability statistics

			if item dropped
	Mean	**Item-rest correlation**	**Cronbach's α**
Exclusiveness_1	3.11	0.834	0.946
Exclusiveness_2	3.06	0.799	0.948
Exclusiveness_3	3.19	0.841	0.946
Exclusiveness_5	3.16	0.818	0.947
Exclusiveness_7	3.08	0.809	0.948
Exclusiveness_8	3.39	0.789	0.949
Exclusiveness_9	3.44	0.782	0.949
Exclusiveness_13	3.47	0.802	0.948
Exclusiveness_16	3.12	0.821	0.947

Table A3.3.1: Respectability scale reliability analysis: Statistics

	Mean	**SD**	**Cronbach's α**
Scale	4.83	1.26	0.929

Table A3.3.2: Respectability scale reliability analysis: Item reliability statistics

			if item dropped
	Mean	**Item-rest correlation**	**Cronbach's α**
Respectability_1	5.11	0.695	0.923
Respectability_2	5.05	0.689	0.923
Respectability_5	4.59	0.772	0.918
Respectability_6	4.62	0.744	0.920
Respectability_7	4.56	0.715	0.922
Respectability_9	4.69	0.736	0.921
Respectability_15	5.03	0.789	0.917
Respectability_17	4.79	0.739	0.920
Respectability_18	5.03	0.771	0.918

APPENDIX 4: CFA survey materials

Table A4.1: Need for status items in the CFA survey

Item Number	Item statement
Exclusiveness_1	I like to own products that only elite individuals can own
Exclusiveness_2	I like to wear clothes that are only recognized by trendy consumers
Exclusiveness_3	I like brands that associate me with high-status groups
Exclusiveness_4	I want to belong to exclusive clubs and organizations
Exclusiveness_5	I want to do things that only top individuals can do
Exclusiveness_6	I prefer to go to places only known by unique individuals
Exclusiveness_7	I like to be viewed as being of a higher status than others
Exclusiveness_8	I like to belong in the top strata of society
Exclusiveness_9	I like to travel to places visited by elite individuals
Exclusiveness_10	I want to go to restaurants with hard-to-get reservations
Respectability_1	I like it when people adopt my recommendations
Respectability_2	I like it when others seek my advice
Respectability_3	I like it when people acknowledge my kindness
Respectability_4	I want to be considered an influential person
Respectability_5	I want to be perceived as a generous person
Respectability_6	I want my peers to look up to me
Respectability_7	I want to be recognized as an accomplished person
Respectability_8	I want to be perceived as a creative person
Respectability_9	I want to be perceived as an expert in my field
Respectability_10	I want to be perceived as a successful person

Additional questions in the CFA survey

Generic Need for status scale (1-7 Likert scale; strongly disagree- strongly agree):

1. I have a desire to increase my position in the social hierarchy
2. I want to raise my relative position to others
3. getting to climb the social ladder is a priority for me
4. I would like to be viewed as being of higher standing than others

Status consumption scale (1-7 Likert scale; strongly disagree- strongly agree):

1. I would buy a brand just because it has status
2. I would pay more for a brand if it had status
3. I would buy a product just because it has status
4. I am interested in new products with status
5. A product is more valuable to me if it has a snob appeal

Helping attitude (1-7 Likert scale; strongly disagree- strongly agree):
1. People should be willing to help others who are less fortunate.
2. Helping troubled people with their problems is very important to me.
3. People should be more charitable toward others in society.
4. People in need should receive support from others.

Attitude towards luxury (1-7 Likert scale; strongly disagree- strongly agree):
1. All things considered; I rather like luxury.
2. I'm not interested in luxury (r)
3. I could talk about luxury for hours
4. I would spend more money on luxury if I had the means

Need for cognitive closure (1-7 Likert scale; strongly disagree- strongly agree):
1. I find that a well-ordered life with regular hours suits my temperament.
2. I don't like to go into a situation without knowing what I can expect from it.
3. I dislike unpredictable situations.
4. I enjoy having a clear and structured mode of life.
5. I don't like to be with people who often make unexpected actions.

Willing-to-spend amount:
Assume you are offered a gift card worth $10,000. You may keep some of it in your account as long as you spend some money on a luxury product (or experience) of your choice. How much would you be willing to spend on that luxury? (use the slider below)

$1000 __$2000__$3000__$4000__$5000__$6000__$7000__$8000__$9000__ $10,000

Willing-to-give amount:
Assume you were given $1000, and you can keep it or spend it as you wish, as long as you donate a part of it to charity. How much would you be willing to give?
(use the slider below)

$100 __$200__$300__$400__$500__$600__$700__$800__$900__ $1000

Frequency of luxury spending:
How often, in a given year, do you...: (1= Never, 2= A little, 3= A moderate amount, 4= Frequently, 5= A lot)
1. Buy luxury products (luxury cars, jewelry, clothing, accessories…etc.)?
2. pay for luxurious experiences (luxurious hotels, cruises, spas, VIP seats…etc.)?
3. Spend money on luxury services (online or offline)

Frequency of charitable giving:
- During a given, how often have you given money to a charitable organization? (1= Never, 2= A little, 3= A moderate amount, 4= Frequently, 5= A lot)

Publicized-charity appeal:

- Assume that the charity organization has given you the option of making your name public on their social media posts if you donate, would that make you (...) to donate? (7-point semantic differential scale)

- Less willing_______More willing

COVID-19 related questions:

Have you been diagnosed with COVID-19?
No
Yes

Has a family member, a relative, or a close friend of yours been diagnosed with COVID-19?
No
Yes

Have you lost your job, or been furloughed, due to the COVID-19 shutdown?
No
Yes

Political affiliation:
Democrat - Lean Democrat - Independent/Not political - Lean Republican -Republican

APPENDIX 5: CFA survey results

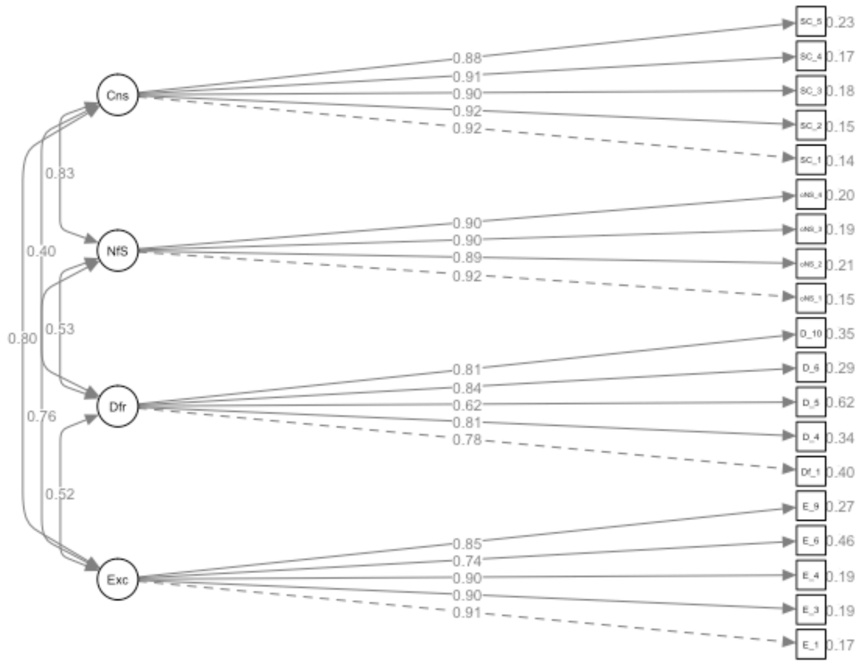


Figure A5.1: CFA model for the developed dimensions, and the existing scales

(Exc= Exclusiveness, Dfr= Respectability, NfS= Need for status scale, Cns= Status consumption tendency)

Table A5.1: Correlations between CFA variables

Correlation path	ρ	Std. error	P-value	LCI	UCI
Exclusiveness ~~ Respectability	0.529	0.033	> 0.001	0.463	0.594
Exclusiveness ~~ NfS	0.779	0.019	> 0.001	0.742	0.816
Exclusiveness ~~ Status Consumption	0.809	0.016	> 0.001	0.475	0.606
Respectability ~~ NfS	0.540	0.033	> 0.001	0.337	0.486
Respectability ~~ Status Consumption	0.412	0.038	> 0.001	0.805	0.864
NfS ~~ Status Consumption	0.835	0.015	> 0.001	0.776	0.841

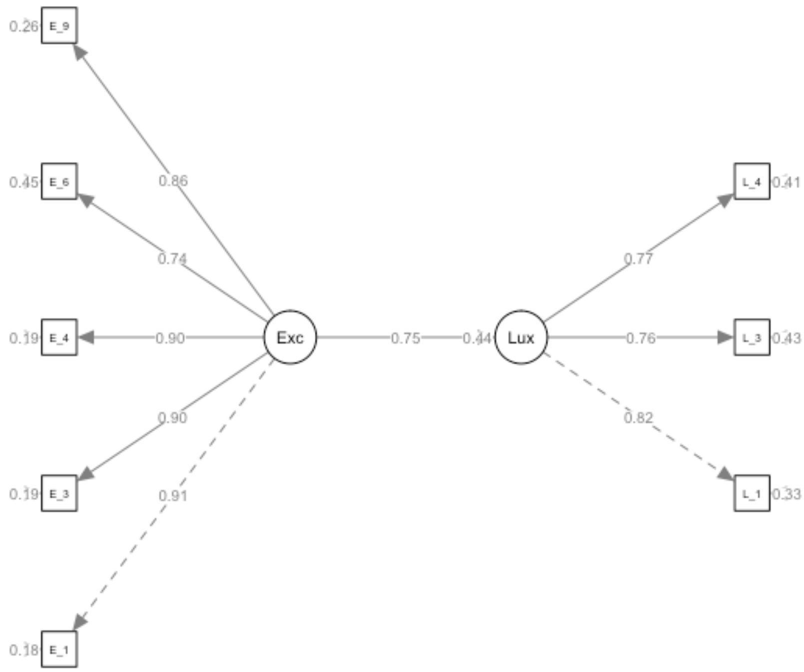


Figure A5.2: Exclusiveness to luxury attitude path

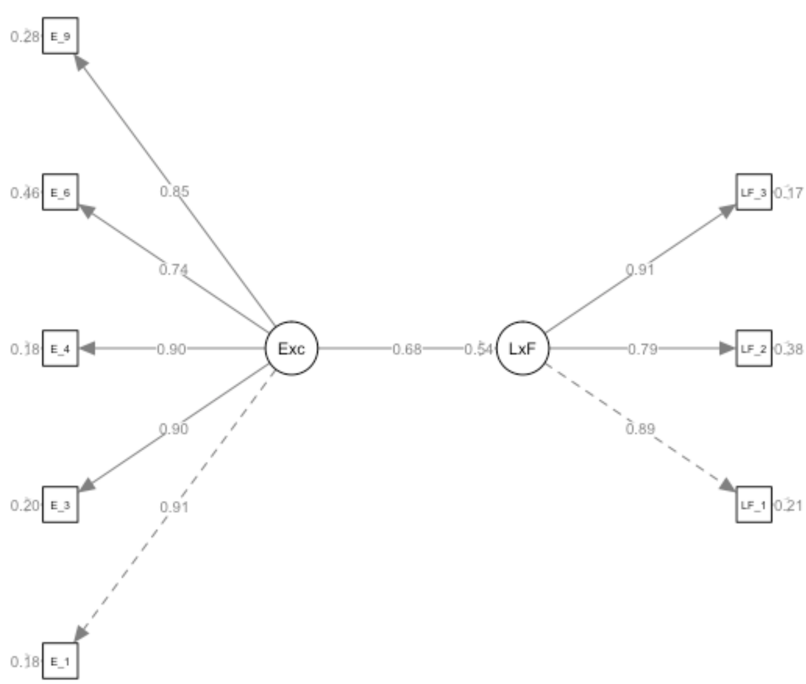


Figure A5.3: Exclusiveness to luxury-spending frequency path

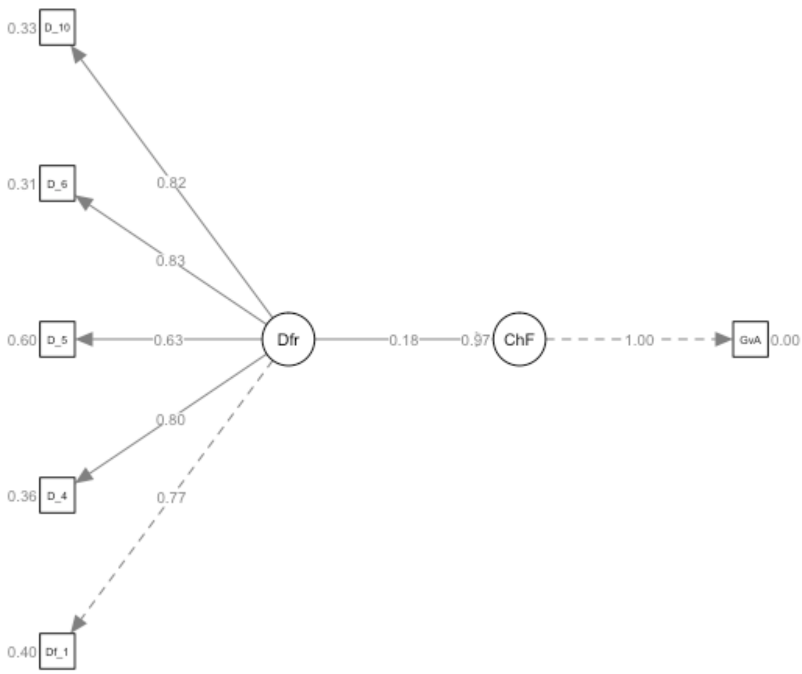


Figure A5.4: Respectability to donation frequency path

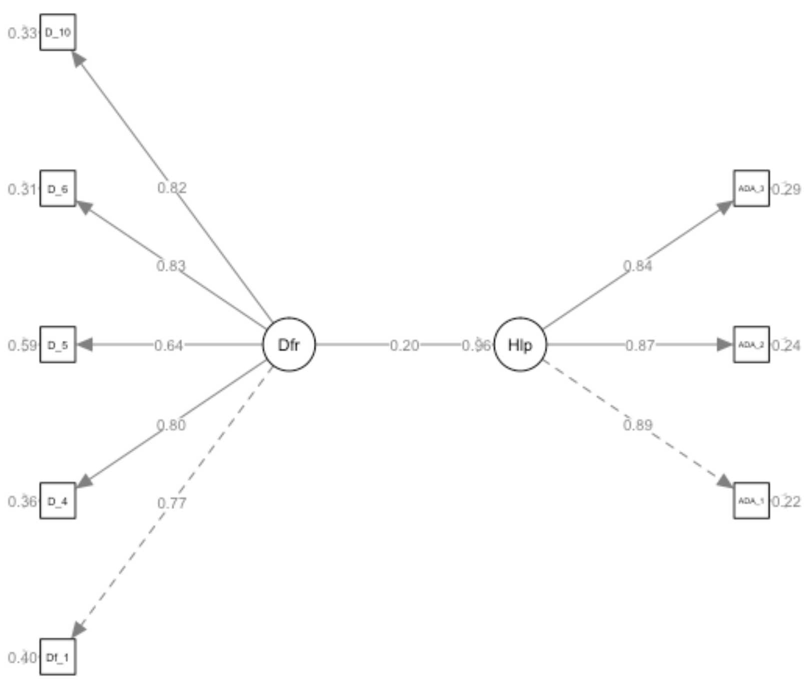


Figure A5.5: Respectability to charity attitude path

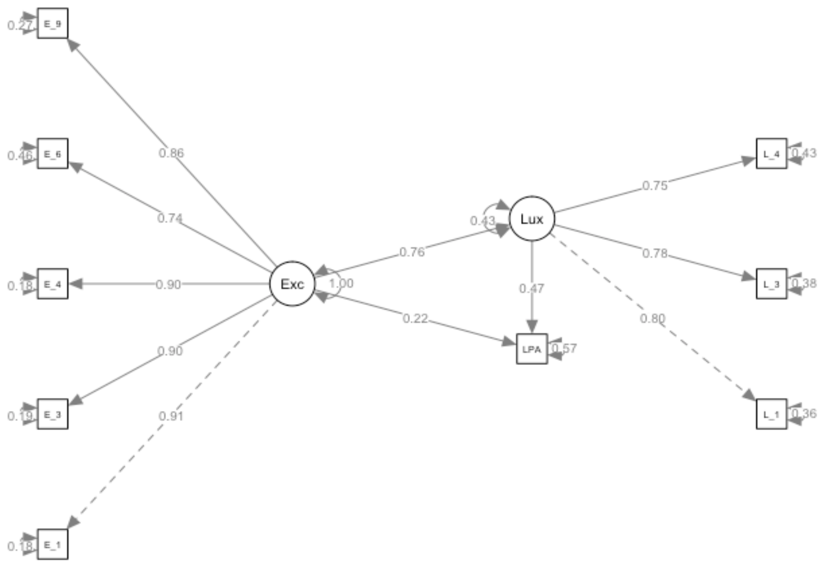


Figure A5.6: Mediation model of exclusiveness effect on luxury-spending frequency

Path plots from nomological validity testing

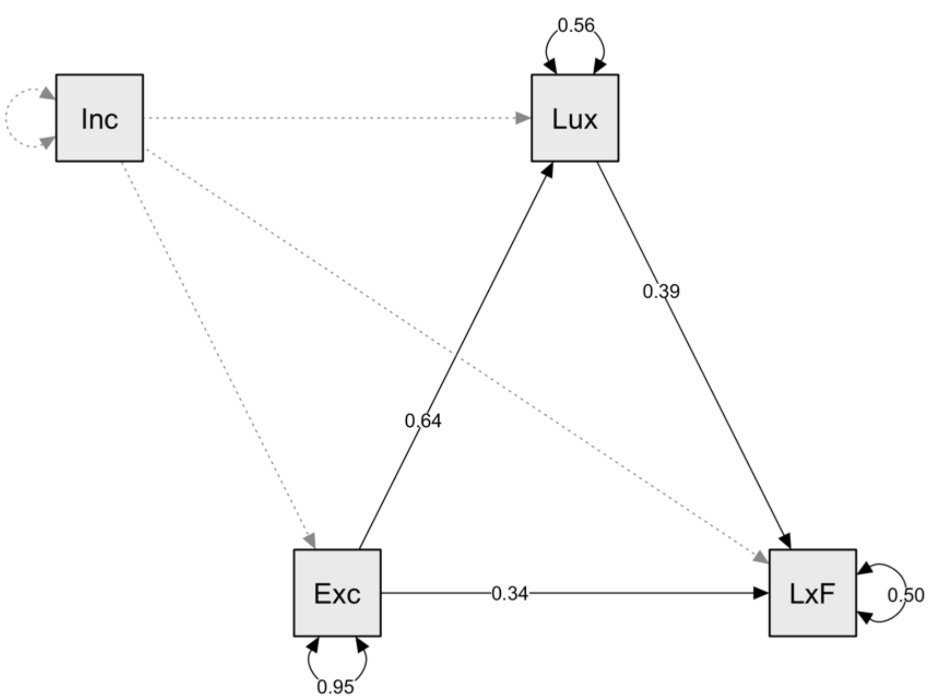


Figure A5.7: Exclusiveness effect on luxury frequency, with income as a confounder
(graph by JASP package)

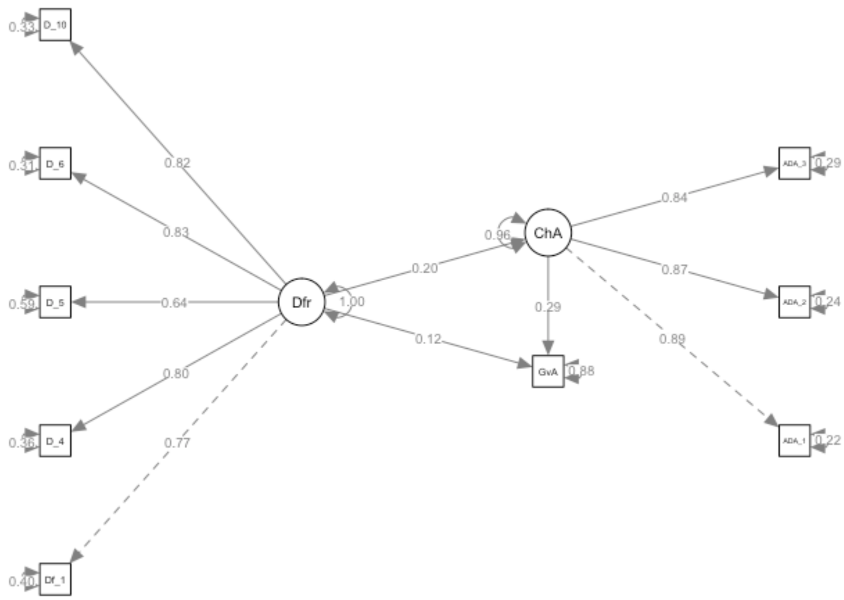


Figure A5.8 Mediation model of respectability effect on charitable-giving frequency, via charitable attitude

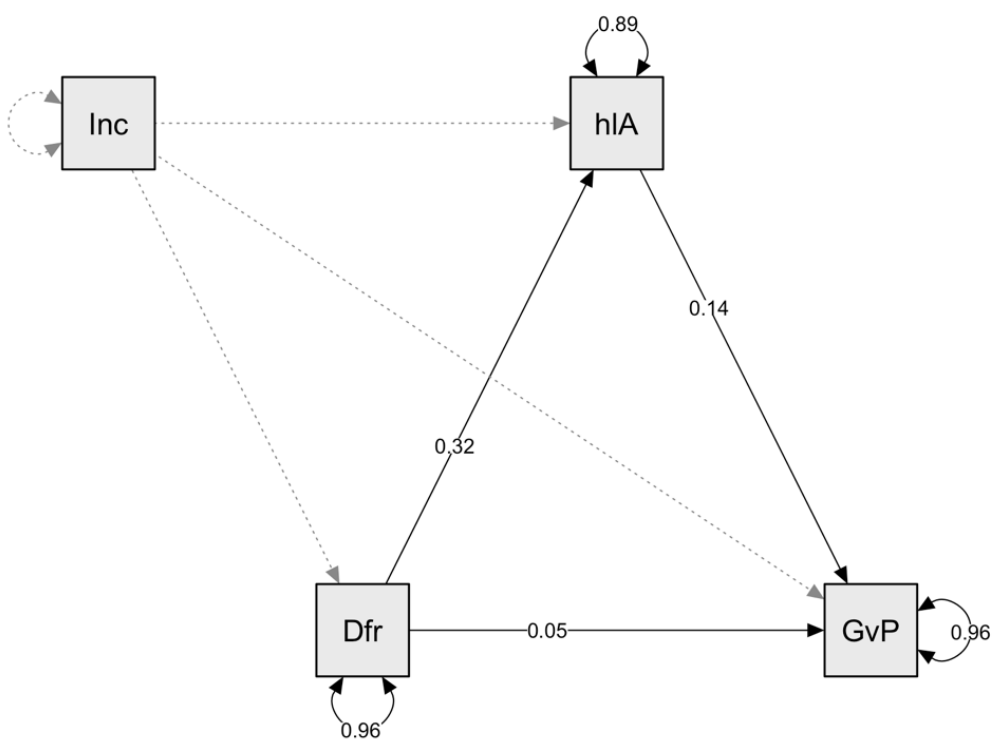


Figure A5.9: Mediation model of respectability effect on charitable-giving frequency via helping attitude, with income as confounder
(graph by JASP package)

Table A5.2: SEM path models

Path	Coefficient	Std. error	T-Value	R^2
Exclusiveness > Luxury attitude	0.61	0.035	17.238***	0.56
Exclusiveness > Luxury spending Frequency	0.27	0.031	17.471***	0.46
Exclusiveness > Luxury attitude > luxury spending frequency (total)	0.26	0.020	13.129***	0.43
Respectability > Charity attitude	0.24	0.055	4.403***	0.04
Respectability > Giving frequency	0.17	0.041	4.187***	0.03
Respectability > Charity attitude > Giving frequency (total)	0.17	0.039	4.342***	0.16
Exclusiveness > Charity attitude	-0.16	0.108	9.732***	0.01
Respectability > Luxury attitude	0.18	0.058	3.076**	0.24

** significant at 0.05 level, ** significant at 0.01 level, *** significant at 0.001 level*

Table A5.3: Fitness measures of the CFA survey

Model	NFI	CFI	GFI	SRMR	Chi^2
CFA	0.962	0.975	0.910	0.046	410.149***
Exclusiveness → Luxury attitude	0.983	0.988	0.973	0.026	57.809***
Exclusiveness → Luxury spending frequency	0.989	0.993	0.980	0.048	44.716***
Exclusiveness → Luxury attitude > Luxury spending frequency	0.975	0.982	0.962	0.027	92.122***
Respectability → Attitude towards helping charity	0.981	0.971	0.979	0.048	50.514***
Respectability → Giving frequency	0.990	0.996	0.992	0.018	14.538$^{(n.s.)}$
Respectability → Helping attitude > Giving frequency	0.979	0.988	0.979	0.044	56.768***

**** significant at 0.001 level; n.s. = not significant*

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