

# Physical Appearance Improvement Influences Prosocial Consumer Behavior

**Natalia Kononov**  
Tel Aviv University

**Danit Ein-Gar**  
Tel-Aviv University

**Stefano Puntoni**  
Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University

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## **Abstract**

Consumers worldwide strive to improve their physical appearance, a desire that has increased with the rise of social media. The billions of dollars and the increasing amount of time people invest in their appearance raise questions about the broader societal impact of appearance improvement behavior. The authors examine whether an improvement in consumers' physical appearance influences subsequent behavior in a domain unrelated to beauty, namely prosocial consumer behavior. Across five studies, the authors find converging evidence that engagement in physical improvement of actual or digital appearance enhances consumers' public self-awareness, resulting in more impression management behavior in the form of donation giving and ethical product choices. The findings further show that charitable behavior is more prevalent when the change in appearance is beautifying and is expected to be noticed by others. Identifying physical improvement as a factor leading to prosociality could be utilized by nonprofit organizations to generate effective charity appeals and for improving ad placement decisions.

**Subject Areas:** *Consumer Behaviour*

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