Does Effort Make Your Heart Fonder Or Mind Wonder? an “Attainability-Efficacy” Framework of Preference Construction

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We show that feelings of effort (vs. ease) increase people’s tendency to work harder and value products, provided they have illusory high control. To such people, effort signals higher efficacy of the particular outcome. Because such people usually engage in effortful pursuit of only the best outcomes, they also infer that an outcome must be the best one available if they will have to put effort into attaining it. Only among people with illusory low control, ease (vs. effort) increases tendency to engage in activities and brand preferences, because ease signals high feasibility of attaining a successful outcome. Thus, preferences are malleable and for some individuals the opportunity to challenge themselves adds value to the outcome.

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SPECIAL SESSION
Motivational Consequences of Effort and Progress in Consumer Goal Pursuit
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ABSTRACTS

“Can You’ or ‘Will You’: How Progress-Based Inferences Impact Motivation in Consumer Goal Pursuit”
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Because consumers ask different questions to establish commitment at beginning versus advanced stages of goal pursuit, we propose that progress that is made through personal effort and that is received with no effort will have distinctively different impact on motivation, depending on individuals’ relative position in goal pursuit. When progress on achieving a goal is low, people are concerned about its attainability. Because low progress that is made through effort investment (vs. endowed progress) signals higher difficulty of goal attainment, it should result in lower goal commitment and, subsequently, deceased motivation. Conversely, when progress on the goal is high and the attainment of the goal is relatively secured, people are more concerned about the value of the goal. Because progress made through personal effort (vs. endowed progress) signals a greater value of the goal, it should lead to greater goal commitment and, subsequently, higher motivation. Results from three studies supported this hypothesis.

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We show that feelings of effort (vs. ease) increase people’s tendency to work harder and value products, provided they have illusory high control. To such people, effort signals higher efficacy of the particular outcome. Because such people usually engage in effortful pursuit of only the best outcomes, they also infer that an outcome must be the best one available if they will have to put effort into attaining it. Only among people with illusory low control, ease (vs. effort) increases tendency to engage in activities and brand preferences, because ease signals high feasibility of attaining a successful outcome. Thus, preferences are malleable and for some individuals the opportunity to challenge themselves adds value to the outcome.

“Practicing What You Preach”
Sunaina Chugani, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Susan M. Broniarczyk, University of Texas at Austin, USA

We often give goal-related advice to others. Given this involvement of ourselves in other’s goal pursuit, what is the effect of giving goal-related advice on our own likelihood of behaving in an advice-consistent manner? We provide evidence suggesting that simply giving goal-related advice allows the advisor to vicariously experience goal progress through the belief that the target will follow the advice, thus giving the advisor license to act in an advice-incongruent fashion. Thus we posit that there is an inherent mechanism in giving advice that perpetuates our failure to practice what we preach.

“Mere Accessibility Effect: Products May be Effective without Consumption”
David Faro, London Business School, UK
Monika Heller, London Business School, UK
Caglar Irmak, University of South Carolina, USA

We show that merely having access to a product can yield the effect claimed to be brought about by the product. Participants who had access to coffee (but did not consume it) during a concentration task performed better than participants who did not have access to coffee during the task. In a second study, participants who had access to a dictionary performed better in word puzzles. The effect of product accessibility on performance was moderated by self-efficacy. Only participants that received negative feedback on a previous task showed the performance enhancing effect of product accessibility.