

ABSTRACT

This research proposes that temporal cues directing consumers to focus on the present versus future differentially impact consumer motivation as a function of their perceived level of progress toward goal pursuit. At low levels of goal progress, consumers feel more motivated to pursue their goal when cued to focus on goal pursuit in the present (vs. future). In contrast, at high levels of goal progress, consumers feel more motivated to pursue their goal when cued to focus on goal pursuit in the future (vs. present). Results of five studies support these predictions and indicate that the effects are driven by concerns about goal attainability at low levels of progress and boredom with goal pursuit at high levels of progress. These findings suggest how managers can use temporal cues to encourage consumers to take goal-relevant action in domains ranging from financial savings to fitness.