

Too Little Money or Time? Using Justifications to Maintain a Positive Image After Self-Control Failure

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Abstract

Consumers frequently fail at exerting self-control. Yet, having good self-control is essential for being relied on and trusted. In six studies (five pre-registered), I test which common excuses for self-control failures (i.e., lack of time versus money) allow consumers to maintain an image of good self-control despite self-control failure. Participants perceived someone who failed at a resolution to have good self-control if they failed because they lacked money (vs. time; Study 1). This effect was due to mediated (Study 2a) and manipulated (Study 2b) perceived controllability of the excuse and influenced participants' hypothetical and real behavior toward the individual (Studies 3-4). Finally, participants lacked insight into these patterns when communicating their own self-control failures, which they attributed to lack of time over money (Study 5).

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Track: Consumer Behaviour