3 Consumer Goals and Motivation

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3.1 Introduction

The formal study of goals and motivation in consumer research has a long history, dating back at least as far as Lazarsfeld's (1935) work on how to ask questions that uncover the true – and often hidden – motives behind consumers' purchases. This interest was further fueled by the post–World War II economic expansion in the USA and parts of Western Europe and East Asia (Eichengreen, 1994; Glyn, 2006), which led consumers with growing disposable incomes to display more distinct preferences. With the intensifying competition in the marketplace and the growing complexity of the business environment, marketing practitioners and academics realized that to better serve consumers and ensure business success, they needed to devote more attention to understanding consumers' needs, wants, and behaviors (Karesh, 1955; Newman, 1955). Thus, the marketing world moved away from purely descriptive consumer research and embraced the methods and insights of sociology, psychology, and other behavioral sciences to understand conscious and nonconscious consumer motivations (Converse, Huegy, & Mitchell, 1958; Dichter, 1947, 1964; Tadajewski, 2006).

Armed with new methods and theories, researchers moved away from the notion of consumers as "rational economic actors," focusing instead on understanding consumers' seemingly idiosyncratic behaviors and preferences (Britt, 1950; Dichter, 1978) and the powerful influence of contextual factors (Maehr, 1974; Nisbett, 1968). Researchers moved beyond mere physiological needs as motivators (Hull, 1943) and explored the more nuanced psychological forces (e.g., values, desires, goals, beliefs) that underpin the initiation and continuance of behavior (Bandura, 1989; Lewin, 1935; Rotter, 1966; Tolman, 1932). Maslow's (1943) "hierarchy of needs" and Murray's (1938) "system of needs" detailed the needs that motivate behaviors, and other researchers focused on uncovering *why* (Dichter, 1978). Methods ranged from purely qualitative approaches, such as depth interviews and association tests, to quantitative approaches, such as surveys and implicit measures (Blankenship et al., 1949; Henry, 1958).

Today, the field has evolved into ever more specialized areas of study, but the overarching aim remains the same: to understand why consumers do what they do and what keeps them going. The impetus for the study of consumer

motivation is not only the quest for business success but also a desire to help consumers live better, more fulfilling lives. In this chapter, we review recent theories and findings on consumer goals and motivation against the backdrop of foundational works. We start with a discussion of how consumers initiate goal pursuit. Next, we examine the factors that help consumers stay motivated in the face of internal and external obstacles, and what happens once consumers attain their goals. We then explore research on how consumers' goal pursuit interacts with the surrounding social world. Finally, we suggest some broad areas for future inquiries on consumer goals and motivation.

3.2 Initiating Goal Pursuit

A goal is defined as the mental representation of a desired (end) state (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007; Kruglanski, 1996). Having a goal produces a discrepancy between one's current state and one's desired state, which creates a tension that motivates behaviors aimed at reducing or eliminating this discrepancy (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999; Carver & Scheier, 1982). Motivation is the energy or force mobilized to attain a goal (Brehm et al., 1983). With an endless number of possible goals for consumers to undertake, how do they decide which to pursue? In this section, we discuss the factors that determine *goal commitment* (whether the consumer accepts a goal and works toward it), *goal setting* (the level of difficulty and specificity of the goal), *pre-actional mindsets* (encompassing deliberation and implementation), and *goal activation* (the processes that trigger goal pursuit).

3.2.1 Goal Commitment

According to expectancy-value theories of motivation, people are generally more committed to a goal – that is, more likely to accept and work toward attaining it – when they consider the goal important or attractive (value) and when they believe they can achieve it (expectancy; Biner, 1987; Brehm & Self, 1989; Liberman & Förster, 2008; Locke & Latham, 1990; Miller, Galanter, & Pribram, 1960; Mitchell, 1982; Okada, 2019; Vroom, 1964; Zhang & Huang, 2010). The value a consumer assigns to a goal depends on both internal factors (e.g., personality, personal background) and external factors (e.g., cultural context, social pressure; McClelland, 1961; Ottingen, Sevincer, & Gollwitzer, 2008). For example, while American consumers tend to value and pursue goals such as breaking away from the group and expressing their individuality, Japanese consumers tend to value and pursue goals such as fitting in with the group and meeting social expectations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Many factors can influence goal expectancy. First, goal expectancy is strongly related to the perceived ease or difficulty of goal attainment. For example, recent work by Han and Gershoff (2019) shows that expectancy can

stem from the memory accessibility of available means (i.e., the activities, objects, or people that facilitate goal pursuit) and the interpretation of such accessibility. Specifically, when people focus on the goal's outcome, a positive (vs. neutral) mood increases their motivation by increasing the number of accessible means, which makes the goal seem more attainable. Similarly, Zhu, Bagchi, and Hock (2019) find that consumers interpret long (vs. short) deadlines for goal completion as a sign that the goal is difficult even when the length of the deadline is explicitly unrelated to difficulty. In turn, an inference that the goal is difficult is detrimental to goal pursuit as it may lead the consumer to commit more resources than they can afford, to procrastinate, or to abandon the goal altogether.

Second, goal expectancy can stem from people's beliefs about their own abilities to produce desired outcomes (i.e., self-efficacy; Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy influences a variety of behaviors from task performance (Bandura et al., 2001; Honicke & Broadbent, 2016; Lane, Lane, & Kyprianou, 2004; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998) to athletic performance (Vargas-Tonsing, 2009; Wurtele, 1986) and health behaviors (Grembowski et al., 1993; Keller, 2006; Strecher et al., 1986). For example, Bolton et al. (2008) show that exposure to prescription-medication marketing (vs. supplement marketing) undermines consumers' motivation to engage in health-protective behaviors because medications are associated with poor health; the association reduces consumers' self-efficacy and perceived abilities to care for their own health. Additionally, Köcher and Wilcox (2021) show that consumers perform better on tasks when using a product that they assembled themselves (vs. a ready-to-use version of the same product) due to an increase in self-efficacy.

Third, goal expectancy can stem from people's beliefs about the instrumentality or effectiveness of available means (Shah & Kruglanski, 2003; Zhang, Fishbach, & Kruglanski, 2007). Park and John (2014) show that when consumers struggle with a difficult task, using a brand they strongly associate with high performance enhances their self-efficacy and hence improves task performance. In one study, students scored higher on difficult Graduate Records Examination questions when they took the test using a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) pen (vs. an unbranded pen), presumably because the strong association between MIT and academic excellence made the MIT pen seem more instrumental to academic success. In the context of prosocial goals, Touré-Tillery and Fishbach (2017) find that people expect their charitable actions to have more impact on recipients who are spatially nearby than on those who are far away, so people are more willing to help those who seem nearer.

Relatedly, Cryder, Loewenstein, and Sheines (2013) show that people are more likely to donate when they receive tangible details about a charity's interventions (e.g., providing access to clean water) than when they receive generic information (e.g., providing a broad range of aid) because clear, tangible details increase people's expectations that their contributions will be effective. Corroborating the importance of clarity, Park, Lu, and Hedgcock

(2017) find that planning the steps required for goal attainment in reverse chronological (vs. chronological) order increases goal expectancy because it allows people to think more clearly about the steps required to reach their goals.

Although an initial assessment of value and expectancy is important for goal commitment, people revisit their assessment throughout goal pursuit. Findings by Zhang and Huang (2010) suggest that people are primarily concerned about a goal's attainability in the early stages of goal pursuit but become increasingly concerned about the goal's value in the later stages.

As a final note, it is not uncommon for people to set "stretch goals" – defined as highly valuable goals that are virtually impossible to attain (Locke & Latham, 2020). While research on consumer stretch goals is sparse, research in institutional settings shows that stretch goals can motivate employees and spark creative problem-solving as long as employees will not be punished for failure (Kerr & Landauer, 2004; Rousseau, 1997).

3.2.2 Goal Setting

Once a consumer has committed to a goal (e.g., I will start practicing yoga), the consumer needs to decide the level at which the goal should be set (e.g., frequency and duration of yoga practice). Goals can vary in their level of difficulty (e.g., 30 minutes of restorative yoga vs. 45 minutes of power yoga each day) and research on goal setting suggests that the level of difficulty at which people set their goals depends largely on expectancy beliefs (e.g., self-efficacy, past success or failure; Locke & Latham, 1990, 2020). For example, Hoffman and Plotkina (2021) show that consumers with low retirement self-efficacy (i.e., a low perceived ability to plan effectively for retirement) consistently set insufficient savings goals. Drawing consumers' attention to the strength (vs. weakness) of their personal resources to achieve a financially secure future boosts their retirement self-efficacy, leading them to set more substantial savings goals. Tuk, Prokopec, and Van den Bergh (2021) find that consumers set more ambitious goals when levels are expressed in terms of goal-inconsistent activities (e.g., do not work out five days a week) than in terms of goal-consistent activities (e.g., work out twice a week) because deciding not to engage in goal-consistent activities elicits negative feelings about the self, triggering the compensatory response of setting higher goal levels.

Goals can also vary in their level of specificity (i.e., whether they have a specific end-state), and the effects of specificity are mixed. On the one hand, people perceive nonspecific (vs. specific) goals as less challenging and more reachable, which makes such goals easier to adopt (Locke & Latham, 1990; Naylor & Ilgen, 1984). Furthermore, nonspecific (vs. specific) goals are less likely to elicit feelings of failure, so people are less likely to give up on them (Kirschenbaum, Humphrey, & Malett, 1981; Soman & Cheema, 2004). On the other hand, people often feel less committed to nonspecific (vs. specific) goals (Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987; Naylor & Ilgen, 1984) and see them as less

important (Ülkümen & Cheema, 2011), which can have detrimental effects on motivation and performance (Klein, Whitener, & Ilgen, 1990; Locke et al., 1981, 1989; Locke & Latham, 1990). Ülkümen and Cheema (2011) resolve these contradictions by examining the moderating role of construal level. Their study shows that a specific savings goal (i.e., an exact dollar amount) helped consumers with high construal to save more money by increasing the importance of the goal (increasing value), whereas a nonspecific savings goal (i.e., no exact amount) helped consumers with low construal save more by reducing the perceived difficulty of the goal (increasing expectancy).

Generally, when expectancy and value are high, setting a specific and challenging goal is more motivating than setting a vague or easy goal (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2006). Furthermore, people are more motivated to adopt and work toward a goal when they are involved in the goal-setting process (Locke & Latham, 2013). Using field experiments, Bommaraju and Hohenberg (2018) examine the effects of different performance-based incentive schemes for sales employees at two Fortune 500 companies. They find that a self-selected incentive scheme increased performance relative to two equivalent incentive schemes in which the goal was set by the employer.

3.2.3 Pre-actional Mindsets

The pre-actional stage of goal pursuit involves two basic, sequential phases. In the first phase (pre-decisional, deliberative), people compare many potential goals and choose on the basis of their wishes, wants, and needs (Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Xu & Wyer, 2007, 2008). The second phase (post-decisional, implemental) occurs after people choose a goal but have not taken any action. In this phase, people are oriented toward planning (i.e., when, where, and how) to pursue and achieve the chosen goal (Kruglanski et al., 2000; Thaler & Shefrin, 1981). Each phase is accompanied by a "mindset" (or psychological orientation) that guides attentional resources, memory, preferences, and behaviors (Rucker & Galinsky, 2016).

In the deliberative phase, people evaluate possible goals, weighing their pros and cons (Gollwitzer, 2012; Xu & Wyer, 2008). People in a deliberative (vs. implemental) mindset tend to be more open-minded, realistic about their options (Fujita, Gollwitzer, & Ottingen, 2007), and less reliant on heuristics (Cryder, Botti, & Simonyan, 2017). The choice of which goal to pursue is guided by its desirability (i.e., value) and feasibility (i.e., expectancy; Gollwitzer & Moskowitz, 1996). For example, Jin, Xu, and Zhang (2015) show that people are more likely to adopt a goal (e.g., complete 70 sit-ups) if its constituent tasks are presented from difficult-to-easy (e.g., 50 sit-ups, then 20 more) rather than from easy-to-difficult (e.g., 20 sit-ups, then 50 more) because people believe that goals are more feasible if they tackle the difficult part first.

In the implemental phase, people have a mindset conducive to the effective execution of a goal through immediate action. Forming implementation intentions – statements that specify, "If obstacle X arises, then I will initiate

behavior Y" – can help sustain goal pursuit and promote goal attainment because doing so increases the memory accessibility of solutions to obstacles that may arise during goal pursuit (Gollwitzer, 1999; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2009; Keller, Kabengele, & Gollwitzer, 2021). For example, by considering the behaviors that are necessary to stay healthy (implementation intentions), people can offset the negative effects of depletion and boost goal-consistent choices such as healthy foods (Hedgcock, Vohs, & Rao, 2012). Furthermore, people vary in their dispositional tendency to form implementation intentions; specifically, people who tend to make short-term plans also tend to form implementation intentions (Lynch et al., 2010).

Implementation intentions can take various forms. Jin, Huang, and Zhang (2013) find that consumers are more likely to *adopt* goals with a flexible implementation structure (e.g., do A, B, and C in any order) but are more likely to *accomplish* goals that have a fixed structure (e.g., do A, then B, then C). Implementation intentions can facilitate goal attainment even when they are not self-generated. For example, an automated call system might prompt consumers to follow a concrete debt repayment schedule (Mazar, Mochon, & Ariely, 2018), or another person with similar values might share their "if, then" plans (Fennis et al., 2011). Similarly, "copy-paste" nudges, whereby people mimic the strategies implemented by others to achieve their goals, can increase goal attainment (Mehr et al., 2020).

An implemental mindset can also have unfortunate consequences such as unrealistically positive expectations and myopic thinking. For example, compared to those in a deliberative mindset, people in an implemental mindset erroneously believe they are less vulnerable to consumption risks such as drug or alcohol addiction or other health problems (Taylor & Gollwitzer, 1995). Moreover, having a plan to implement goal-directed actions can make consumers less receptive to actions that fall outside that plan, even if those actions could facilitate their goal. For example, Bayuk, Janiszewski, and Leboeuf (2010) studied participants in a concrete mindset and found that those in the implemental phase of saving money (vs. not in that phase) spent more money on impulse purchases because avoiding impulse purchases was not how they had planned to implement their savings goal. Relatedly, Townsend and Liu (2012) show that implementation intentions can backfire when people feel farther from (vs. closer to) goal attainment, because concrete plans can give rise to emotional distress and reduce motivation. In one study, very overweight consumers (i.e., farther from their weight goal) who made a concrete meal plan were more likely to choose an unhealthy snack compared to both overweight consumers who did not make a plan and average-weight consumers (i.e., closer to their weight goal).

Finally, the implementation phase propels consumers toward goal-directed behaviors. For example, Dhar, Huber, and Khan (2007) find that making an initial purchase elicits an implemental (vs. deliberative) mindset, which generates the momentum to keep shopping. Deliberating on goals and considering their implementation determines which goals people adopt and pursue, creating

cognitive representations ("nodes") of goals, subgoals, and corresponding means (Kruglanski et al., 2002; Martin & Tesser, 1989).

3.2.4 Goal Activation

Goal activation occurs when a goal is triggered and becomes more accessible in memory (Anderson, 1983; Neely, 1977; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977). Recent theorizing suggests that goal activation is a function of chronic activation (which is relatively stable over time) and temporal activation (which is triggered by contextual cues and suppressed by competing goals; Van Osselaer & Janiszewski, 2012).

The people, places, things, concepts, and contexts a person encounters can elicit "bottom-up" goal activation, whereby goal-relevant objects such as means or temptations (e.g., a textbook or a party invitation) activate the corresponding goal (e.g., studying for an exam; Berkowitz & LePage, 1967; Fishbach, Friedman, & Kruglanski, 2003; Shah & Kruglanski, 2003). In one experiment, Chartrand et al. (2008) activated prestige or thrift goals by asking participants to unscramble sentences that included prestige-related words (e.g., "he prestige what want did") or thrift-related words (e.g., "he frugal what want did") and found that participants in the prestige condition (vs. thrift condition) were more likely to choose pricier Nike socks (vs. a better-value Hanes option). Similarly, Gamlin et al. (2019) show that political cues in the environment (e.g., on election day) activate the goal of being responsible, leading consumers to make more responsible product choices (e.g., utilitarian over hedonic sunglasses).

Once active, goals have a strong "top-down" influence on consumers, guiding their attention, perceptions, memory (Aarts, Dijksterhuis, & De Vries, 2001; Shah, Friedman, & Kruglanski, 2002; Srull & Wyer, 1986), and evaluations (Brendl & Higgins, 1996; Brendl, Markman, & Messner, 2003; Lewin, 1935; Markman & Brendl, 2000; Peak, 1955; Rosenberg, 1956; Trope & Fishbach, 2000). For example, people with an active weight-loss goal exhibit positive implicit evaluations of means that would facilitate the goal (e.g., diet) and negative implicit evaluations of objects that would impede the goal (e.g., cake; Fishbach, Zhang, & Trope, 2010). Thus, people with an active goal tend to engage in goal-consistent behaviors and avoid goal-inconsistent behaviors (Bargh & Barndollar, 1996; Fishbach & Shah, 2006; Gollwitzer, 1996; Kruglanski, 1996; Markman & Brendl, 2000; Thaler & Shefrin, 1981; Wertenbroch, 1998).

People may be fully aware of the cues that motivate their goal-related judgments and behaviors (Laran, Janiszewski, & Salerno, 2016) or completely unaware of the activation and effects of a goal on their judgments, evaluations, and behaviors (Bargh, 1990; Bargh et al., 2001; Chartrand & Bargh, 1996; Moors & De Houwer, 2001; Moors, De Houwer, & Eelen, 2004; Shah & Kruglanski, 2002, 2003). Either way, goal-related constructs remain highly accessible in memory until the person fulfills or disengages from the goal

(Bargh et al., 2001; Goschke & Kuhl, 1993; Laran, Janiszewski, & Salerno, 2019). For example, Zeigarnik (1927) shows that people recall incomplete tasks more readily than completed tasks. Once a person completes a goal, it becomes less accessible, and motivation toward the goal diminishes (Förster, Liberman, & Higgins, 2005; Marsh, Hicks, & Bink, 1998), thus allowing the person to direct their attention to other important pursuits.

3.3 Staying Motivated

Once a consumer initiates goal pursuit, consciously or nonconsciously, they face a challenge – how to stay motivated long enough to attain the goal. In this section, we discuss how one's motivation during goal pursuit is influenced by the anticipated *outcome* of goal pursuit, the *process* of goal pursuit, and the desire to maintain a positive *self-concept*. We also discuss how motivation arises from a consumer's *regulatory focus* and the impact of *multiple goals* on motivation during goal pursuit.

3.3.1 The Outcome: Extrinsic Motivation

The end-state or outcome of goal pursuit plays a critical role in motivation, and it can take many forms, ranging from mere completion (Zeigarnik, 1927) to external rewards such as money, food, or praise (Carver & Scheier, 2001; Hull, 1932; Miller, Galanter, & Pribram, 1960; Mischel, Shoda, & Rodriguez, 1989). Research shows that motivation varies with the consumer's proximity to their desired end-state (*stages of goal pursuit* and *cybernetic models*), their own interpretation of the steps taken towards the goal (*dynamics of goal pursuit*), and whether the goal is broken into smaller chunks or subgoals (*goal structure*).

Stages of Goal Pursuit. Motivation fluctuates with the consumer's proximity to the beginning or end of goal pursuit. Several studies have documented a robust "goal-gradient" effect, whereby people (and animals) increase their efforts and persistence as they approach the end of goal pursuit (Brown, 1948; Förster, Higgins, & Idson, 1998; Heath, Larrick, & Wu, 1999; Hull, 1932; Nunes & Drèze, 2006). For example, in a field experiment, Kivetz, Urminsky, and Zheng (2006) showed that participants who rated songs online in return for reward certificates logged on to the rating website more frequently, rated more songs per session, and spent more time rating songs as they approached the reward goal. One explanation for the goal-gradient effect is that the marginal impact of each action on goal attainment (i.e., goal expectancy) increases as one approaches the desired end-state (Higgins & Brendl, 1995), which increases one's eagerness to work toward the goal. Indeed, if someone is pursuing a goal that requires 10 actions, then completing the first action accomplishes only 10% of the task, while the seventh action accomplishes 25% of the remaining task, the ninth action accomplishes 50%, and the tenth action accomplishes 100%.

Alternatively, people may use the start (instead of the end) of goal pursuit as their reference point (Bonezzi, Brendl, & De Angelis, 2011; Koo & Fishbach, 2012; Suher, Huang, & Lee, 2019). Then, according to the same logic, motivation is highest at the beginning of goal pursuit because the perceived marginal impact of each action is the highest (e.g., the first action represents 100% more progress than the starting point, while the second action represents only 50% more progress, the third action represents only 33% more, and so on).

Finally, Wallace and Etkin (2018) show that goal specificity (i.e., whether a goal has a specific end-state) influences whether people use the start or end of goal pursuit as the reference point for monitoring their progress. For specific goals (e.g., find 10 errors in a row), people tend to focus on the endpoint, producing a classic goal-gradient effect. For nonspecific goals (e.g., find as many errors as possible in a row), people tend to focus on the starting point, so motivation decreases with distance from the starting point.

Cybernetic Models. Generally, during goal pursuit, people monitor their progress by assessing the discrepancy between their current state and their desired end-state (i.e., goal) and are motivated to close the gap (Carver & Scheier, 1982). When the discrepancy is large (vs. small), the resultant negative feedback is greater, increasing the motivation to engage in goal-consistent activities. The motivational system continuously monitors the magnitude of the discrepancy and drives behaviors aimed at closing the gap – a process of self-regulation put forth by "cybernetic control theory" (Miller, Galanter, & Pribram, 1960; Powers, 1973; Wiener, 1948). When people engage in behaviors that reduce discrepancies (e.g., working out), they may lose the motivation for additional goal-consistent actions. Licensing effects occur when an initial goal-consistent action reduces the motivation to continue engaging in subsequent goal-consistent behaviors (Khan & Dhar, 2006; Monin & Miller, 2001; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). For example, in one study, Sachdeva, Iliev, and Medin (2009) found that people donated less to a self-selected charity after writing a story describing their own caring and generous traits (vs. their own greedy and selfish traits), presumably because a story about their generosity (vs. selfishness) made them feel closer to (vs. further from) attaining their goal of being altruistic, which licensed them to disengage from the goal.

Etkin and Laran (2019) find that restricting the freedom to choose the initial goal-consistent behavior can combat licensing effects and increase subsequent goal-consistent behaviors. In their study, students with an academic performance goal who completed an initial academic task chosen by a computer (vs. by themselves) persisted longer on a subsequent academic task (e.g., an unsolvable anagram). Zemack-Rugar, Corus, and Brinberg (2019) advance that individual differences explain some of the variation in the extent to which consumers persist or license after making initial goal progress.

Dynamics of Goal Pursuit. Goal pursuit is "dynamic" in that motivation can either increase or decrease after the initial goal-related steps (Fishbach & Dhar, 2005; Fishbach, Dhar, & Zhang, 2006; Fishbach, Zhang, & Koo, 2009). Specifically, people may interpret their initial steps as a sign of either progress

or commitment to the goal. When people focus on progress, they perceive a reduced discrepancy between the current state and the desired state (Carver & Scheier, 1982; Higgins, 1987), so they divert effort to other important goals (i.e., balancing across multiple goals). By contrast, when people focus on commitment, they perceive that the goal has high value and expectancy (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974; Vroom, 1964), so their motivation increases.

Goal Structure. People are inclined to break complex tasks into smaller chunks or subgoals (Newell & Simon, 1972). Research shows that breaking a goal into a series of subgoals can increase motivation by making the goal seem more attainable and by providing more opportunities for positive reinforcement with each subgoal attainment (Brunstein, 1993; Carver & Scheier, 1982; Emmons, 1992; Locke & Latham, 1990; Pervin, 1989; Soman & Shi, 2003; Vallacher & Wegner, 1987). For example, Zhang and Gao (2016) find that rewarding consumers piecemeal after each subgoal attainment elicits a stronger sense of achievement and thus is more motivating than providing an equivalent lump-sum reward after a longer period of work. Lembregts and Pena-Marin (2021) find that the motivation to complete a goal is higher if the goal is set in a unit with a larger number (e.g., run 10,000 m) than if it uses an equivalent but smaller number (run 10 km); the effect occurs because the larger number is more easily decomposed into a goal structure consisting of more subgoals. Similarly, in a study by Ülkümen and Thomas (2013), consumers were more likely to adopt a goal framed as planned over 12 months (vs. 1 year) because it seemed shorter and easier to attain.

Under certain circumstances, however, subgoals can be detrimental to motivation and goal pursuit (Amar et al., 2011; Fishbach, Dhar, & Zhang, 2006; Newell & Simon, 1972). For example, Amir and Ariely (2008) find that the effect of subgoals on motivation depends on whether progress is certain. When people are unsure about their distance to the goal, subgoals can reduce uncertainty and increase motivation. By contrast, when people are certain about their distance to the goal, subgoals can lead to complacency and decrease their motivation and interest in the goal. Huang, Jin, and Zhang (2017) show that in the beginning stages of goal pursuit, when people are uncertain about the attainability of the goal, focusing on subgoals (vs. the overall goal) increases goal expectancy and hence motivation. In the end-stages, however, motivation depends primarily on the value of the goal, and focusing on subgoals (vs. the overall goal) decreases the perceived value of goal pursuit, thus decreasing motivation. Finally, Sharif and Woolley (2020) show that subgoals can skew consumers' perceptions of progress during goal pursuit because consumers begin to monitor their progress based on the number of subgoals completed rather than the number of actual goal steps completed.

3.3.2 The Process: Intrinsic Motivation

Whereas outcome-focused or extrinsic motivation centers on reaching a desired end-state, process-focused or intrinsic motivation centers on actions that are a desired end-state in and of themselves (Kruglanski et al., 2018; Laran &

Janiszewski, 2011; Lepper & Greene, 1978; Sansone et al., 1992; Sansone & Morgan, 1992; Woolley & Fishbach, 2016). Research on intrinsic motivation finds that people are more motivated to pursue their goals when they experience the process of goal pursuit as enjoyable, interesting, and satisfying (Bindra, 1974; Custers & Aarts, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 2010; Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Fishbach, Shah, & Kruglanski, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Woolley & Fishbach, 2015). Individual differences can determine intrinsic motivation toward a goal. For example, education researchers have linked chronic intrinsic motivation to improved academic performance (Deci et al., 1991; Lepper, Corpus, & Iyengar, 2005; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). In other domains, goal persistence is better predicted by intrinsic motivation than by goal importance. For example, Woolley and Fishbach (2017) find that follow-throughs on New Year's resolutions, academic goals, and health goals are better predicted by the extent to which people enjoy pursuing these goals than by the importance they attach to the goals.

Beyond individual differences, research has explored contextual factors that can make a goal or an activity intrinsically motivating (Sansone & Morgan, 1992). For example, Woolley and Fishbach (2016) presented gym-goers with a list of fitness exercises (e.g., shoulder press, bicep curl). The researchers asked one group of gym-goers to select the exercises that they found most useful for their health goal and another group to select the exercises they found most enjoyable. The latter group completed more sets on average, even though the two groups chose comparable sets of exercises. Relatedly, Fishbach and Choi (2012) found that participants who focused on the experience of completing an origami task were more motivated to continue the activity than those who focused on the outcome of the task, because focusing on the experience produced greater enjoyment during the task.

Conversely, factors that make the goal process less enjoyable decrease motivation and the likelihood of engaging in goal-consistent activities in the future (Laran & Janiszweski, 2011; Werle, Wansink, & Payne, 2015). For example, Etkin (2016) finds that numerical tracking (e.g., counting the number of steps taken in a day) increases goal attainment but reduces intrinsic motivation; tracking makes an otherwise enjoyable activity seem more like work and less like fun, so it decreases subsequent engagement in the activity. Munichor and Leboeuf (2018) show that people are more motivated to pursue goals with completion timeframes that are described in terms of the duration (e.g., "two weeks from now") rather than the date (e.g., "between today and May 6"). The researchers find that dates increase the accessibility of competing obligations within the interval, so people focus more on the unenjoyable aspects of the goal process and feel less intrinsically motivated. By contrast, durations present the timeframe in isolation, so people can focus narrowly on the goal's attractive outcome.

3.3.3 The Self-Concept: Self-Signaling Motivation

When a goal is central to one or more aspects of the self-concept, people often engage in goal-consistent behaviors, at least in part, to claim, maintain, or

protect a positive view of themselves (Bodner & Prelec, 1996; Oyserman, 2015). Self-perception theory posits that people often learn about themselves by observing their own behaviors, from which they draw inferences about their own attitudes, traits, and characteristics (Bem, 1972). Furthermore, people have a strong need to maintain a positive self-concept (Dunning, 2007; Greenwald, 1980; Greenwald & Breckler, 1985; Steele, 1988), so they strategically engage in behaviors that allow them to signal to themselves that they have the traits and characteristics they desire (i.e., self-signaling; Gamlin, 2019; Prelec & Bodner, 2003). Research shows that the tendency to engage in goal-consistent behavior to maintain a positive self-concept is stronger when people perceive their own actions as particularly indicative of the type of person they are (i.e., self-diagnostic; Gai & Puntoni, 2021; Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2012; Touré-Tillery & Wang, 2022). Specifically, actions are deemed self-diagnostic if they send a clear signal about one's traits and characteristics (*clarity of self-signal*) or if one expects to remember them (*expected memorability*).

Clarity of the Self-Signal. People are more motivated to engage in goal-consistent behaviors that can clearly and unambiguously be attributed to their internal traits and characteristics, because they deem such behaviors more self-diagnostic (Baumeister et al., 2001; Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008; Schweitzer & Hsee, 2002). Research on self-signaling shows that people typically see their behavior as self-diagnostic if they do not personally benefit from the behavior or if they incur personal costs in terms of energy or time (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2012), money or other material resources (Dubé, Luo, & Fang, 2017; Mazar, Amir, & Ariely, 2008; Savary, Li, & Newman, 2020), or social benefits (Kristofferson, White, & Peloza, 2014; Savary & Goldsmith, 2020). By contrast, behaviors that are costless or have personal benefits could be attributed to reasons other than one's traits and characteristics, and thus are perceived as less self-diagnostic. Accordingly, Gneezy et al. (2012) find that donating one's own money to charity (a costly prosocial behavior) seems more self-diagnostic of generosity than having a donation made by someone else in one's name (a costless prosocial behavior), which could be attributed to effortlessness and/or to the generosity of the proxy. It follows that people are more likely to continue to engage in goal-consistent prosocial behavior after a costly (vs. costless) prosocial behavior.

Relatedly, when people expect to fail at a focal goal that is central to their self-concept (e.g., getting a good grade), they self-handicap by engaging in behaviors that are harmful to goal attainment (drinking with friends instead of studying; Berglas & Jones, 1978; Higgins & Harris, 1988; Higgins, Snyder, & Berglas, 1990). Then, goal failure can be attributed to external factors (Martin, Marsh, & Debus, 2003), rather than to internal factors, which would damage their positive self-concept (see also Eskreis-Winkler & Fishbach, 2019). Recent work by Gamlin (2019) shows that the reverse occurs when people expect to succeed at a focal goal that is central to their self-concept: They forgo instrumental means that would interfere with a clear attribution of success to internal (rather than external) factors. For example, students who expect to get a good

grade on an important exam "self-sabotage" by passing up studying with a smart student before the exam (i.e., an instrumental means) so that their success can be attributed solely to their own efforts and abilities.

Expected Memorability. A series of recent studies suggest that people perceive actions and choices as more self-diagnostic if they expect to remember them. It is well documented that what people remember about themselves (i.e., autobiographical memory) has a strong influence on their self-concept. Beyond what people *actually* remember, research suggests that what they *expect* to remember or forget (i.e., expected memorability) affects their ability to maintain a positive self-concept and, hence, their likelihood of engaging in goal-consistent behavior (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2015; Touré-Tillery & Light, 2018). For example, a study by Touré-Tillery and Kouchaki (2021) showed that when participants were led to perceive that they had a poor memory (vs. a control group), they were less likely to contribute to a charitable cause and to make healthy food choices because they perceived a lower likelihood of remembering those actions, which made them seem less self-diagnostic. Furthermore, this effect occurred only for identity-central goals.

Relatedly, Gai and Puntoni (2021) find that people perceive lying as more self-diagnostic (of their dishonesty) when using their first language (L1) relative to their second language (L2), so people are less likely to behave dishonestly in L1. Indeed, L1 provides a unique cue for autobiographical memories because most personal experiences and information are encoded in this language. Finally, Touré-Tillery and Fishbach (2012) find that people are more likely to engage in goal-consistent behavior at the beginning and end of a goal sequence than in the middle because they perceive the initial and final actions as more self-diagnostic (see also Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2015). Given that people have better memories for stimuli and experiences that happen at the beginning (primacy effect) and at the end of a sequence (recency effect; see Greene, 1986, for review), the authors suggest that people also *expect* to have better memory for experiences at the beginning and end (vs. middle) of a sequence.

3.3.4 Regulatory Focus: Motivation from Fit

Regulatory focus includes two motivational orientations: promotion focus and prevention focus (Higgins, 1987, 1998). A promotion focus motivates an individual to pursue "ideal goals" – those they want to accomplish, including their hopes, wishes, and aspirations. By contrast, a prevention focus motivates an individual to pursue "ought goals" – those they feel they have to or should accomplish, including their obligations, duties, and responsibilities. A person's regulatory focus may constitute a chronic individual difference (Brendl & Higgins, 1996; Haws, Dholakia, & Bearden, 2010) or may be activated by contextual cues (Haws, Bearden, & Dholakia, 2012; Sengupta & Zhou, 2007), goal-related feedback (Bullard & Manchanda, 2017; Higgins, 2002), or even metaphors (Xu & Chen, 2020).

When people pursue promotion (vs. prevention) goals, they are more sensitive to and oriented toward approaching gains (vs. avoiding losses; Brendl & Higgins, 1996; Higgins, 2002). As a result, promotion- (vs. prevention-) focused consumers tend to employ "eagerness" (vs. "vigilance") strategies during goal pursuit, looking for ways to move forward and keep their opportunities open (vs. being careful and avoiding mistakes; Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Higgins, 1987, 1998). For example, Basu and Ng (2021) find that promotion-focused consumers are more eager, so they respond more favorably to aggregate pricing ($1200 per year) than to equivalent periodic pricing ($100 per month). Regulatory focus has other implications for the ways consumers spend and manage their money. Kim and Ha (2016) show that prevention- (vs. promotion-) focused consumers are more fallible when it comes to financial investment decisions because they tend to hold on to losing assets for too long and sell winning assets too soon.

People tend to be most motivated to pursue a goal when there is a "fit" between their own chronic or situational regulatory focus (i.e., promotion vs. prevention) and the characteristics of the goal itself (e.g., to approach gains vs. avoid losses; Chang, Lin, & Chang, 2011; Higgins, 2000; Septianto et al., 2020). For example, consumers tend to be more promotion-focused right after receiving their paycheck (vs. much later), so they buy more items for pleasure and happiness (i.e., promotion-focused purchases) than items that fulfill duties and responsibilities (i.e., prevention-focused purchases; Mishra, Mishra, & Nayakankuppam, 2010). Haws, Bearden, and Dholakia (2012) find that fit effects are more likely when the context primes a promotion focus (e.g., "Enjoy Life!") for chronically promotion-focused consumers than when the context primes a prevention focus (e.g., "Don't miss out on being safe!") for chronically prevention-focused consumers (see also Lee & Aaker, 2004; Micu & Chowdhury, 2010; Septianto et al., 2020).

Despite robust evidence of fit effects, there is some debate as to when fit is motivating. For example, Niese, Libby, and Pfent (2021) show that nonfit (vs. fit) is motivating for consumers with high preexisting goal commitment but demotivating for consumers with low goal commitment. In one study, participants indicated their commitment to environmental goals and then played a game that induced fit or nonfit. Participants with high goal commitment donated less to an environmental charity under regulatory fit (vs. nonfit), whereas the opposite occurred for participants with low goal commitment. Beyond fit effects, Cornwell, Franks, and Higgins (2019) suggest that people should strive for "balance" in their motivational orientations because dominant, unchecked motivational orientations can overpower the important influences of weaker orientations and undermine goal pursuit.

3.3.5 Multiple Goals

Consumers typically pursue more than one goal at the same time (Fernandez & Kruglanski, 2019). Research shows that people who pursue multiple important goals tend to favor multifinal means (i.e., means that can advance multiple

goals at the same time; Köpetz et al., 2011; Kruglanski et al., 2002) even when one of the goals is nonconscious (Chun et al., 2011). A consumer pursuing environmental and fitness goals might bike to work (a means to both goals) instead of both going to the gym (a means only to the fitness goal) and donating to an environmental-protection organization (a means only to the environmental goal). Despite their intuitive appeal, multifinal means can also be perceived as less instrumental than means that serve only one goal (Zhang, Fishbach, & Kruglanski, 2007). Holding multiple goals can decrease the chances of successful goal attainment compared to holding a single goal due to *goal conflicts* and *self-control* conflicts.

Goal Conflict. While some goals can be pursued sequentially (get a promotion at work, then save for a house, and then travel the world) or simultaneously (get a promotion at work while saving for a house), others are in direct conflict (save for a house and travel the world). A *goal conflict* occurs when the pursuit of one goal directly impedes progress on the other(s) (Emmons, King, & Sheldon, 1993; Etkin, Evangelidis, & Aaker, 2015; Kernan & Lord, 1990). Consumers routinely face such goal conflict (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Carlson, Meloy, & Miller, 2013; Dhar & Simonson, 1999; Goldsmith, Friedman, & Dhar, 2019; Gray, Ozer, & Rosenthal, 2017; Kleiman & Hassin, 2013; Swait, Argo, & Li, 2018). For example, eating a delicious chocolate cake facilitates the goal of enjoying oneself but impedes the goal of losing weight (Stroebe et al., 2008, 2013).

Goal conflict induces negative affect and an uncomfortable state that consumers are motivated to resolve (Emmons, 1989; Emmons & King, 1988), typically through choice justification or reason-based choice (Shafir, Simonson, & Tversky, 1993). For example, Goldsmith, Friedman, and Dhar (2019) show that consumers justify their choices by selecting options that satisfy the "choice-set goal" (i.e., the goal that is implied by the choice-set) even if that choice conflicts with another goal they hold. In one study, consumers with a savings goal chose the most expensive option from a set of vacation hotels because the choice-set implied a goal to splurge, which helped them justify their extravagance.

Consumers also resolve goal conflict by making justifiable choices outside the domain of the conflict. For example, Etkin and Memmi (2021) asked participants to describe a time when two of their goals did (vs. did not) conflict and then indicate whether they would rather spend the next hour on work-related tasks (catching up on emails) or leisure activities (watching TV). Participants in the goal-conflict condition were more likely to choose work over leisure because the former is easier to justify.

Self-Control. People frequently struggle to override immediate temptations to attain long-term goals (i.e., exercise self-control; Baumeister, 2002; Duckworth & Steinberg, 2015; Lamberton, 2020). Hofmann et al. (2012a, b) show that consumers have daily (or even hourly) desires (e.g., sleep) that impede valued long-term goals (e.g., education, professional achievement). Self-control helps consumers overcome such conflicts in favor of their more important, long-term

goals through strategies such as avoiding or devaluing temptations (Fishbach, Zhang, & Trope, 2010; Kruglanski & Köpetz, 2010; Mischel & Ebbesen, 1970; Mischel, Ebbesen, & Raskoff Zeiss, 1972). For example, Raghubir and Srivastava (2009) show that consumers with a goal of limiting their spending are more likely to choose to receive bills in larger denominations (e.g., one $20 bill) than in smaller denominations (e.g., 20 $1 bills) because the larger bill will be harder to spend. Zhang, Huang, and Broniarczyk (2010) show that consumers engage in counteractive construal: Participants with a strong (vs. weak) weight-loss goal evaluated a cookie as having more calories, particularly when the cookie was easily accessible.

Although many antecedents of self-control are extensively documented in decades of research (see Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994, for a review), new studies continue to uncover novel factors. Recent findings indicate that self-control is affected by internal factors such as the activation of reward-seeking goals (Shaddy & Lee, 2020; Wang & Huang, 2018) and one's sense of self-importance (Kim, Wadhwa, & Chattopadhyay, 2019) as well as by external factors such as numerical information (Dallas, Liu, & Ubel, 2019; Wilcox & Prokopec, 2019) and the relative position of means and temptations (or vice and virtue; Chernev & Gal, 2010; Fishbach & Zhang, 2008).

Regarding internal factors, Wiggin, Reimann, and Jain (2019) showed participants blurred images and either revealed or did not reveal the unblurred images later, leading to either satisfied or unsatisfied curiosity. The authors found that participants with unsatisfied (vs. satisfied) curiosity subsequently consumed more chocolate candies due to a heightened desire for rewards. Furthermore, a study by Kim, Wadhwa, and Chattopadhyay (2019) showed that taglines such as "for busy college students" (vs. "for college students") decreased students' preference for indulgent foods (i.e., "X-tra bacon double-double") by heightening their sense of self-importance. Regarding external factors, Choi, Li, and Samper (2019) find that for dieters, calorie counts that are just below a round number (e.g., 199 calories vs. 200 calories) induce a cognitive bias toward the leading number (1 vs. 2), so the food seems less unhealthy and dieters consume more of it. Relatedly, Tangari et al. (2018) find that providing the calories-per-serving for unhealthy snacks disconfirms expectations about the snack's unhealthiness, leading consumers to relinquish self-control and eat more.

3.4 Goals in the Social World

Consumers exist in a social world; their goal pursuits and interpersonal circumstances are intricately linked. Recent theories on the "transactive" aspects of goal pursuit suggest a dynamic web of interpersonal influences on goals (Fitzsimons, Finkel, & vanDellen, 2015). In this section, we discuss four important aspects of goal pursuit in a social world: *interactive goal pursuit* (the interplay between goals and the social world), *collective goals* (common goals

that are pursued with others), *shared goals* (personal goals that are also pursued by others), and *interpersonal instrumentality* (the role of other people in one's goal pursuit).

3.4.1 Interactive Goal Pursuit

There is a bidirectional link between personal goal pursuit and the social world. On the one hand, relationship partners and social cues can influence goal commitment and activate goals, with implications for motivation and performance (Cannon & Rucker, 2020; Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003; Shah, 2003). For example, people exercise more self-control when they expect to be evaluated by others (Ma et al., 2020; Touré-Tillery, Steinmetz, & DiCosola, 2022) and when they expect the same restraint from members of their social group (Doebel & Munakata, 2018). Furthermore, people adopt the goals of others around them (Aarts, Gollwitzer, & Hassin, 2004; Laurin, 2016). In one study, Walton et al. (2012) showed that an incidental ingroup relationship – sharing a birthday – with someone who worked in a math department increased participants' persistence at an unsolvable math puzzle, a goal presumably valued by the incidental ingroup member. The pull of the social world is so strong that people may even use self-control to overcome their aversions and engage in risky and personally harmful behavior (e.g., consuming unwanted alcoholic beverages) in order to gain social acceptance (Rawn & Vohs, 2011). On the other hand, goal pursuit shapes social judgments and behaviors. Lemay, Ryan, and Teneva (2021) find that pursuing goals that are valued by a relational partner increases the quality of the relationship. Moreover, Huang et al. (2015) show that people feel closer to others who are pursuing the same personal goal (e.g., weight loss) in the initial stages of goal pursuit but distance themselves from such others in later stages.

3.4.2 Collective Goals

Working in groups can present challenges (e.g., freeriding, social loafing; Kerr, 1983; Latané, Williams, & Harkins, 1979; Shepperd, 1993) but also can boost motivation, effort, and performance when working toward a collective goal (Koomen, Grueneisen, & Herrmann, 2020). Early findings show that working together toward a collective goal (e.g., repairing a vehicle to get food) can reduce interpersonal conflict even between previously combative groups, over and above the social harmony that can come from mere social interactions (e.g., eating in the same dining hall; Sherif, 1958). Moreover, Weldon, Jehn, and Pradhan (1991) find that working together toward a difficult (vs. easy) goal increases motivation and the group's overall performance.

3.4.3 Shared Goals

People are more successful at attaining a personal goal (e.g., weight loss) when multiple others in their network share the same goal (Leahey et al., 2012) or

when they form implementation intentions for a shared goal with even a single friend (e.g., self-screening for breast cancer; Prestwich et al., 2005). Shared goals present opportunities for *social comparison* (Festinger, 1954), whereby the focal person compares themselves to those they deem inferior (downward social comparison) or superior (upward social comparison). If another person is only marginally ahead in their goal progress, then people become more motivated because overtaking the superior performer is still possible. However, motivation decreases once the superior performer has attained the goal and there is no chance of catching up (Chan & Briers, 2019). Moreover, envy of another person's goal progress can motivate people toward self-improvement, particularly when they attribute the person's achievements to effort (Salerno, Laran, & Janiszewski, 2019).

People tend to prefer downward over upward social comparison to protect their self-esteem (Tesser, 1988). Accordingly, Huang (2018) finds that people avoid learning about others' goal progress when in the middle (vs. beginning) of goal pursuit to avoid potentially damaging comparisons when their own motivation is at its lowest. Huang, Lin, and Zhang (2019) find that near the end (vs. beginning) of goal pursuit, people are more certain about their goal attainment, so they get more competitive with others who are pursuing the same goal and may even sabotage others' goal pursuit when possible (e.g., by giving them harder tasks). Similarly, people with an important goal (e.g., health) tend to make goal-consistent choices for themselves (e.g., an apple over a candy bar) but goal-inconsistent choices for friends to enhance their perception of relative progress toward their goal (Bryksina, 2020).

3.4.4 Interpersonal Instrumentality

Like objects and activities, other people can facilitate (i.e., be instrumental to) a person's goals (Orehek, Forest, & Barbaro, 2018). People feel closer to friends and family members they consider instrumental (Fitzsimons & Shah, 2008), and perceiving a mutual instrumentality between oneself and a romantic partner can enhance the relational bond (Orehek & Forest, 2016). People tend to feel closer to instrumental others in the beginning stages of goal pursuit, when goal progress is low and the motivational priority of the goal is high, than in the end-stages, when substantial goal progress has been attained and motivation is shifting to other goals (Fitzsimons & Fishbach, 2010). On the flip side, people who are deemed noninstrumental (or "impedimental") to the goals of others may have fewer, weaker social ties. Indeed, Stavrova, Ren, and Pronk (2021) suggest that people with low self-control are lonelier because their behaviors can have negative (impedimental) implications for other people's goals.

Finally, a person's interest in forming social connections can be affected by mere expectations of interpersonal instrumentality (Slotter & Gardner, 2011). In studies by Gamlin and Touré-Tillery (2017), participants briefly observed a stranger's behavior on social media and then indicated their willingness to connect with the stranger. Participants were more willing to connect with a

stranger who engaged in behavior consistent (vs. inconsistent) with their own goals because they expected the stranger to be more instrumental. As a result, participants were more receptive to products and services recommended by the goal consistent (vs. inconsistent) stranger.

3.5 Conclusion and Future Directions

Research on goals and motivation started more than a century ago and continues to thrive today, attesting to its importance for a broad range of academic fields (e.g., consumer research, social psychology, sociology, health research, education) and audiences (e.g., marketers, managers, public policy-makers, educators, consumers themselves). The present chapter set out to distill this rich literature by presenting recent works against the backdrop of foundational theories. A consumer's decision about which goal(s) to pursue is affected by several factors: goal commitment, goal setting, pre-actional mindsets, and goal activation. During goal pursuit, the consumer faces a multitude of obstacles, conflicting goals, and temptations that can derail their progress. The consumer's ability to stay the course during goal pursuit depends on three primary motivators: the outcome of goal pursuit, the process of goal pursuit, and the consumer's desire to maintain a positive self-concept. Furthermore, regulatory fit, balancing multiple goals, and self-control play critical roles in motivation, as do the interactions (both positive and negative) between a consumer's social world and their goal-directed behaviors. Although the extant literature is extensive, there is still much to learn about how consumers initiate goal pursuit, stay motivated during goal pursuit, and are influenced by the social world during goal pursuit. We propose three broad areas for future research.

First, we discussed three "motivators" during goal pursuit: the outcome, the process, and the self-concept (see also Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2018). We described these motivators as distinct, each producing a unique "force" that propels a consumer toward their goal, but questions remain as to whether the motivational consequences of these motivators are additive, multiplicative, or opposing. On the one hand, studies suggest that the outcome and self-concept motivators can work in opposition. For example, people are motivated to engage in prosocial behaviors because such behaviors send a positive self-signal, but the presence of a rewarding outcome (e.g., social recognition) may decrease the self-diagnosticity of the behavior and thus undermine prosocial motivation (Gneezy et al., 2012; Savary & Goldsmith, 2020). Research also suggests that the outcome and process motivators can work in opposition. For example, offering rewards for an activity that is intrinsically enjoyable reduces the motivation to engage in that activity (e.g., Lepper et al., 1973). On the other hand, studies suggest that the outcome and process motivators can complement each other to boost motivation. For example, Woolley and Fishbach (2018) show that immediate (vs. delayed) rewards can increase rather than undermine intrinsic motivation because the immediacy of the reward increases the degree

to which the activity is associated with enjoyment. Future research is needed to provide a more comprehensive picture of the interplay between the outcome, the process, and the self-concept as sources of motivation.

Second, future research might further explore how consumers pursuing multiple goals prioritize between those goals. Research on self-handicapping (Berglas & Jones, 1978) and self-sabotaging (Gamlin, 2019) shows that people engage in behaviors detrimental to an achievement goal that is central to their self-concept (e.g., get a good grade) when they expect to fail or succeed at this goal, respectively, because they seek to maintain a positive self-concept. In these cases, people seem to prioritize their self-concept goal at the expense of their achievement goal. This literature suggests that a person's degree of certainty regarding the outcome of a goal (i.e., failure or success) might be one factor shaping goal prioritization. In the case of self-handicapping and self-sabotaging, goals with more certain outcomes (e.g., get a good grade) are deprioritized in favor of goals with relatively less certain outcomes (e.g., maintain a positive self-concept). More research is needed to investigate this possibility and uncover other factors that might influence how people prioritize between multiple important goals.

Finally, future research may explore when and why consumers pursue goals for which they lack social support. People are social animals and thus tend to pursue and succeed at goals for which interpersonal support is available (Fitzsimons, Finkel, & vanDellen, 2015). However, people often pursue goals that are not endorsed by their primary social ties (e.g., a first-generation college student dissuaded by family members to take on student debt), are socially controversial (e.g., a college student dropping out to start a tech company, against their family's wishes), or are directly impeded by their social ties (e.g., a fraternity member pursuing academic excellence despite peer pressure to party). The literature on goals and motivation could benefit from a better understanding of why consumers persist at such goals and what strategies or circumstances might influence their chances of success.

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