

On the Psychology of Resource Monitoring



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Zoom Link: <https://chicagobooth.zoom.us/j/4842073855?pwd=Mmo1R2dJU3lJUDhKQTV1eXpHMVFnZ09>

Theoretical Background

• Many goals involve managing limited resources such as money, time, or calories. Accurately monitoring these resources can facilitate goal achievement^{1,2,3}. While most prior research has examined these resources independently, we propose a framework for considering when and why people are likely to track resources.

Study Design

- Participants from a nationally representative (U.S.) sample were assigned to money, time, or calories conditions.
- Participants created budgets for how they would use their resource over four time horizons.
- For each of the four budgets, participants responded to a resource monitoring scale (adapted from Soman, 2001) and seven questions that could theoretically mediate differences monitoring behavior.

Conclusions

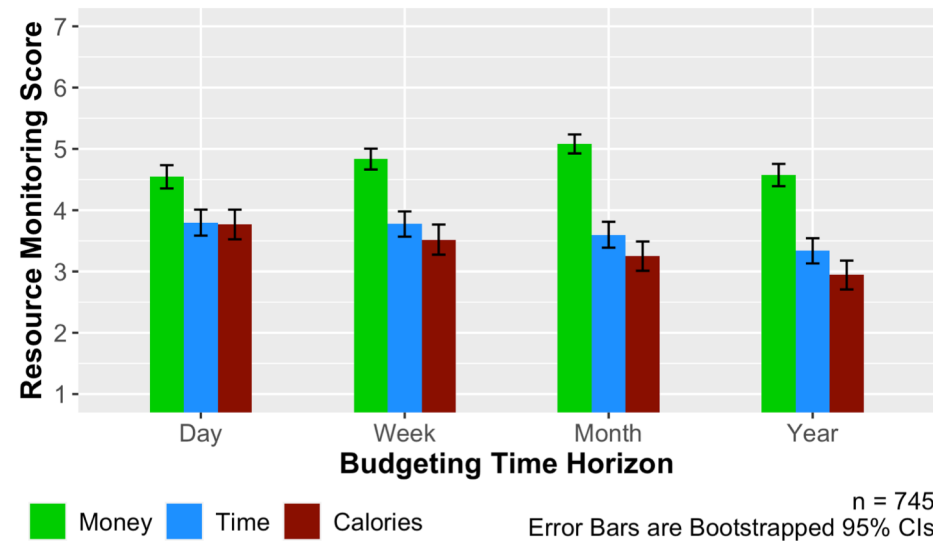
- Across all time horizons, money was monitored most closely and time and calories were monitored to a similar degree.
- Use of time and calories was monitored most closely over a day, while monitoring of money peaked at one month.
- In a factor analysis, variables related to the efficacy of budgeting loaded together and variables related to difficulty of budgeting loaded together.
- In a multiple mediation analysis, only the efficacy factor was significant. This suggests differences in the efficacy of budgeting, rather than the difficulty of budgeting, can explain differences in monitoring across resources.

References

1. Koo, M., & Fishbach, A. (2012). The small-area hypothesis: Effects of progress monitoring on goal adherence. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(3), 493-509.
2. Heath, C., & Soll, J. B. (1996). Mental budgeting and consumer decisions. *Journal of consumer research*, 23(1), 40-52.
3. Soman, D. (2001). The mental accounting of sunk time costs: Why time is not like money. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 14(3), 169-185.

Results

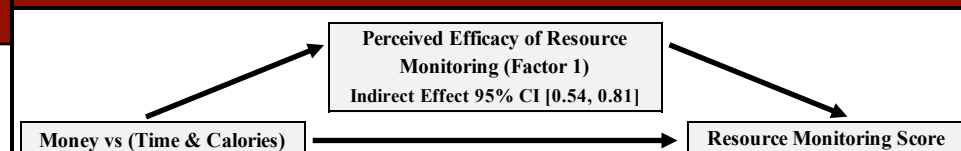
Extent of Monitoring by Resource



Potential Mediators

Potential Mediators	Factor 1 (Efficacy)	Factor 2 (Difficulty)	Factor 3 (Other)
Ability to Make Up for Past Resource Use	0.83	0.06	0.23
Ability to Prepare for Future Resource Use	0.85	0.05	0.06
Budget Helpfulness	0.50	0.25	-0.23
Control over Sticking to Budget	0.23	0.97	0.10
Pain of Budgeting	0.05	-0.34	-0.01
Similarity of Resource Use in Subsequent Periods	0.10	0.22	-0.02
Percent of Budget That is Discretionary	-0.01	0.01	0.28
Number of categories	-0.04	-0.01	-0.29

Mediation Model



Note: Mediation analysis included all three factors as mediators. Figure only displays significant mediators.