
MAGDALENA GAŚSIOROWSKA

SWPS Uniwersytet Humanistycznospołeczny
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3798-9265>
mgasiorowska@swps.edu.pl

ALEKSANDRA PRUSEK

SWPS Uniwersytet Humanistycznospołeczny
<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8111-8534>

Loss of Control and Preference for ‘Lucky’ Products: When a Can of Soda Becomes a Symbol of Victory

Utrata kontroli a preferencja „szczęśliwych” produktów: kiedy puszka napoju staje się symbolem zwycięstwa

ABSTRACT

This study examined whether the belief that purchasing a product can bring good luck depends on one’s current sense of control. Building on evidence that repeated product-related successes can foster the belief that a product influences outcomes, we experimentally strengthened or weakened participants’ sense of control and then asked them to evaluate a scenario in which a protagonist purchased a ‘lucky’ product. The dependent variables were perceived product efficacy, attitude towards the product, purchase intention, and maximum willingness to pay. A reduced sense of control significantly increased belief in the efficacy of ‘lucky’ products. The results are discussed within the framework of compensatory control theory.

KEYWORDS: illusion of control, compensatory control theory, compensatory mechanisms, sense of control, lucky products

STRESZCZENIE

Niniejsze badanie sprawdzało, czy przekonanie, że zakup produktu może przynieść szczęście, zależy od aktualnego poczucia kontroli. Opierając się na ustaleniach wskazujących, że powtarzające się sukcesy związane z danym produktem mogą sprzyjać przekonaniu, iż produkt wpływa na wyniki zdarzeń¹, w eksperymencie wzmocniano lub osłabiano poczucie kontroli uczestników, a następnie proszono ich o ocenę scenariusza, w którym bohater nabywał „szczęśliwy” produkt. Zmiennymi zależnymi były postrzegana skuteczność produktu, postawa wobec niego, intencja zakupu oraz maksymalna gotowość do zapłaty. Obniżone poczucie kontroli istotnie zwiększało wiarę w skuteczność „szczęśliwych” produktów. Wyniki omówiono w ramach teorii kontroli kompensacyjnej.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: iluzja kontroli, kompensacyjna teoria kontroli, mechanizmy kompensacyjne, poczucie kontroli, szczęśliwe produkty

Theoretical Background

Sense of Control as a Fundamental Psychological Need

A sense of control over one's life and environment is recognised as a fundamental psychological need that underpins well-being, a sense of security, and effective functioning². Situations involving uncertainty, novelty, or difficulty tend to increase individuals' need for control, while a perceived loss of control may result in heightened negative affect, including anxiety, helplessness, and mood disturbances³. Repeated experiences of ineffectiveness or a lack of influence over outcomes can lead individuals to develop a belief in their own helplessness, a condition known as *learned helplessness*, whereby people cease to initiate actions even when objective opportunities for success remain⁴.

A central cognitive-motivational construct associated with a sense of control is *self-efficacy* – the belief in one's capacity to achieve desired outcomes⁵. Empirical findings suggest that individuals with high self-efficacy tend to exhibit greater

¹ E.J. Hamerman, G.V. Johar, *Conditioned superstition: Desire for control and consumer brand preferences*, 'Journal of Consumer Research' 2013, no. 40(3), pp. 428–443, <https://doi.org/10.1086/670761>.

² R.W. White, *Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence*, 'Psychological Review' 1959, no. 66(5), pp. 297–333; J.M. Burger, *Negative reactions to increases in control*, 'Psychological Bulletin' 1989, no. 106(2), pp. 246–260.

³ P. Quan, C. Feng, Q. Yang, *Lacking control: Situation valence, effects of perceived control, and illusory pattern perception*, 'Social Behavior and Personality' 2011, no. 39(10), pp. 1413–1416.

⁴ M.E.P. Seligman, *Science as an ally of practice*, 'American Psychologist' 1996, no. 51(10), pp. 1072–1079.

⁵ A. Bandura, *Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change*, 'Psychological Review' 1977, no. 84(2), pp. 191–215.

motivation, reduced anxiety, and higher self-esteem⁶. Importantly, even an illusory sense of control – where the perception of influence exceeds actual agency – can function adaptively, promoting psychological stability and coping in situations of uncertainty⁷.

Compensatory Control Theory (CCT)

Compensatory Control Theory (CCT), developed by Kay, Whitson, and colleagues, posits that individuals strive to maintain the belief that the world is structured, predictable, and comprehensible⁸. When personal control is threatened or diminished, individuals may engage in compensatory strategies to restore a sense of order – either by affirming internal sources of control (e.g., personal agency) or by endorsing external sources (e.g., institutions, religious systems, cultural norms).

Early research into compensatory mechanisms includes studies showing that hungry individuals are more likely to perceive ambiguous stimuli as food-related⁹, and that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds overestimate the size of coins relative to their wealthier peers¹⁰. More recent evidence indicates that a perceived lack of control increases the tendency to detect patterns in random information – a phenomenon referred to as *illusory pattern perception*¹¹.

Compensatory Strategies and Their Manifestations

Within the CCT framework, researchers distinguish between specific compensatory strategies, which are logically related to the source of the loss of control, and non-specific compensatory strategies, which are unrelated to the original threat but serve to symbolically restore order. Non-specific strategies

⁶ M.J. Landau, A.C. Kay, J.A. Whitson, *Compensatory control and the appeal of a structured world*, 'Psychological Bulletin' 2015, no. 141(3), pp. 694–722.

⁷ J.A. Whitson, A.D. Galinsky, *Lacking control increases illusory pattern perception*, 'Science' 2008, no. 322(5898), pp. 115–117.

⁸ A.C. Kay, D. Gaucher, J.L. Napier, M.J. Callan, K. Laurin, *God and the government: Testing a compensatory control mechanism for the support of external systems*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 2008, no. 95(1), pp. 18–35.

⁹ R. Levine, I. Chein, G. Murphy, *The relation of the intensity of a need to the amount of perceptual distortion: A preliminary report*, 'Journal of Psychology' 1942, no. 13(2), pp. 283–293.

¹⁰ J.S. Bruner, C.C. Goodman, *Value and need as organizing factors in perception*, 'Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology' 1947, no. 42(1), pp. 33–44.

¹¹ J.A. Whitson, A.D. Galinsky, *Lacking control increases illusory pattern perception*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–117.

include beliefs in conspiracy theories¹², scapegoating and the attribution of blame to external groups¹³, and a preference for hierarchical social structures as a means of imposing perceived order¹⁴.

In consumer behaviour, individuals with a diminished sense of control show a marked preference for products with clearly defined boundaries¹⁵ and closed shapes in logos, as well as greater reliance on recommendations from others¹⁶. Additionally, such consumers are more likely to believe in the effectiveness of 'lucky' products¹⁷ – items believed to symbolically or magically influence desired outcomes.

Lucky Products as a Compensatory Strategy

Lucky products function similarly to superstitious objects; they are imbued with symbolic value and perceived as facilitators of success. Hamerman and Johar (2013) demonstrated through a series of experimental studies that belief in the luck-enhancing quality of products increases when consumers experience a lack of control. Their findings showed that individuals associate product use with positive outcomes, even when the association is entirely coincidental.

This phenomenon is consistent with the theory of the *illusion of agency*, which posits that people often overestimate their control over external events, especially when their actions precede desirable outcomes¹⁸. In such contexts, consumers may develop the belief that possessing or using a particular product causally contributes to a favourable result, despite the absence of an objective causal mechanism.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Z.K. Rothschild, M.J. Landau, D. Sullivan, L.A. Keefer, *A dual-motive model of scapegoating: Displacing blame to reduce guilt or increase control*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 2012, no. 102(6), pp. 1148–1163.

¹⁴ J.P. Friesen, R.P. Eibach, A.C. Kay, A.D. Galinsky, *Seeking structure in social organization: Compensatory control and the psychological advantages of hierarchy*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 2014, no. 106(4), pp. 590–609.

¹⁵ K.M. Cutright, *The beauty of boundaries: When and why we seek structure in consumption*, 'Journal of Consumer Research' 2012, no. 38(5), pp. 775–790.

¹⁶ A.M. Peluso, A. Bonezzi, M. De Angelis, D.D. Rucker, *Compensatory word of mouth: Advice as a device to restore control*, 'International Journal of Research in Marketing' 2017, no. 34(2), pp. 499–515.

¹⁷ E.J. Hamerman, G.V. Johar, *Conditioned superstition: Desire for control and consumer brand preferences*, *op. cit.*, pp. 428–443.

¹⁸ D.M. Wegner, T. Wheatley, *Apparent mental causation: Sources of the experience of will*, 'American Psychologist' 1999, no. 54(7), pp. 480–492.

Research Problem and Hypotheses

The theoretical considerations outlined above suggest that individuals are motivated to maintain a sense of control and that, when this sense of control is lost, they may engage in compensatory behaviours, including the use of superstitious or symbolic objects such as lucky products. The present study aims to investigate empirically whether individuals experiencing a lack of control exhibit a stronger belief in the efficacy of lucky products than those with an intact sense of control.

Research Hypotheses

- H1:** Individuals experiencing a lack of control will express a stronger belief in the effectiveness of lucky products than those with preserved control.
- H2:** Individuals deprived of a sense of control will report more positive attitudes towards the lucky product than those in control.
- H3:** Individuals with reduced control will be willing to pay more for a lucky product than individuals with intact control.
- H4:** Individuals lacking control will express a stronger intention to purchase and possess a lucky product than those who feel in control.

Method

The aim of the study was to examine whether individuals' belief in the efficacy of a lucky product varied depending on their induced psychological state – specifically, the presence or absence of perceived control.

Participants

The study involved 60 participants (34 women, 26 men) aged between 19 and 67 years ($M = 28.73$, $SD = 11.82$). All participants were students at universities located in Warsaw who volunteered to take part in the study. Participation was anonymous and voluntary.

Participants were recruited through online university announcements and word-of-mouth invitations. All participants provided informed consent prior to the study.

The sample size ($N = 60$) was determined based on sample sizes used in similar experimental studies on perceived control and compensatory behaviour¹⁹, and was deemed sufficient to detect medium-sized effects with an acceptable level of statistical power.

¹⁹ E.J. Hamerman, G.V. Johar, *Conditioned superstition: Desire for control and consumer brand preferences*, *op. cit.*, pp. 428–443; J.A. Whitson, A.D. Galinsky, *Lacking control increases illusory pattern perception*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–117.

Design

The study used a between-subjects experimental design. Perceived situational control was manipulated through an autobiographical recall task to either enhance or diminish participants' sense of personal control. The dependent variables included belief in the product's association with positive outcomes (lucky product belief), product attitude, purchase intention, and willingness to pay.

Materials and Measures

Control Manipulation

The manipulation of perceived control followed established procedures used in previous research²⁰. Participants in the low-control condition received the following instruction:

Please recall and describe in detail a significant event from the past few years of your life during which you felt a complete lack of control over what was happening. Focus especially on your thoughts, emotions, and psychological state.

Participants in the high-control condition received the following instruction:

Please recall and describe in detail a significant event from the past few years of your life during which you felt in full control of what was happening.

Lucky Product Belief Task

Participants were presented with a story based on Hamerman and Johar (2013), which was adapted and translated for the current study:

A group of friends went to watch a basketball game in which their favourite team was playing. During the first half, their team was losing by a significant margin. At half-time, one friend, Adam, went to the vending machine to buy a drink. Since his favourite Coca-Cola was unavailable, he bought a can of Dr Pepper instead. In the second half, the team took a substantial lead and eventually won the game in spectacular fashion. A few months later, the same group attended another important game. When their team began losing again, Adam exclaimed, 'It's time to get a Dr Pepper and turn things around!'

Participants were then asked to rate their agreement with statements such as the following, using 10-point Likert scales:

²⁰ J.A. Whitson, A.D. Galinsky, *Lacking control increases illusory pattern perception*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–117; A.C. Kay, D. Gaucher, J.L. Napier, M.J. Callan, K. Laurin, *God and the government...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–35; J.P. Friesen, R.P. Eibach, A.C. Kay, A.D. Galinsky, *Seeking structure in social organization...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 590–609.

- 'I believe Adam's team will win again if he buys a can of Dr Pepper.'
- 'Drinking a can of Dr Pepper helped the team succeed in the previous game.'
- 'Drinking Dr Pepper can help the team succeed in the current game.'
- 'In future games, Adam should buy Dr Pepper to help his team.'
- 'If Adam had chosen a different drink, the team's chance of winning would have been lower.'

Product Attitude Scale

Participants completed four 7-point semantic differential scales evaluating the product's likeability, participants' interest in the product, its perceived quality, and its overall favourability.

Purchase Intention and Willingness to Pay

Purchase intention was assessed on a 10-point scale ranging from 'definitely would not buy' to 'definitely would buy'. Participants also indicated the amount in PLN they would be willing to pay for one 330 mL can of Dr Pepper.

Procedure

Participants first completed the control manipulation task by writing about a personal memory related to either high or low control. They were informed that these personal narratives would not be collected and were intended solely for personal reflection. Participants were given 10 minutes to complete this task.

Next, they were presented with the 'lucky product' story and subsequently answered questions measuring their belief in the product's efficacy, attitude towards the product, purchase intention, and perceived value.

At the conclusion of the session, participants were debriefed to ensure that they were emotionally stabilised and informed about the true purpose of the study, particularly regarding the psychological manipulation.

Data Analyses

All statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27. Prior to the main analyses, the data were screened for missing values, normality, and outliers. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed for all dependent variables.

To test the study hypotheses, a series of one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) was conducted to compare participants in the high-control and low-control conditions. Separate ANOVAs were conducted for each dependent variable: (1) belief in the lucky product,

- (2) product attitude,
- (3) willingness to pay, and
- (4) purchase intention.

For all analyses, statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Belief in Lucky Products

To examine whether loss of control increased belief in lucky products, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare participants in the high-control and low-control conditions. Belief in the lucky product was assessed by summing responses to five items measuring the extent to which participants believed that the product helped or would help the protagonist's team succeed.

The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the groups, $F(1, 58) = 26.33$,

$p = 0.0001$. Participants in the low-control condition reported a significantly stronger belief in the lucky product ($M = 18.93$, $SD = 8.54$) than those in the high-control condition ($M = 9.40$, $SD = 5.53$).

These results support Hypothesis 1.

Product Attitude

To assess differences in product attitude between the groups, another one-way ANOVA was conducted. Product attitude was measured using four items evaluating whether the product was likeable, good, interesting, and of high quality, and a total score was calculated.

The results showed a marginally significant difference, $F(1, 58) = 3.556$, $p = 0.064$, indicating a trend-level effect.

Participants in the low-control group evaluated the product more positively ($M = 18.37$, $SD = 5.68$) than those in the high-control group ($M = 15.80$, $SD = 4.83$).

These findings offer partial support for Hypothesis 2.

4.3. Product Price

To assess whether the perceived value of the product differed between the groups, participants were asked to estimate how much a can of Dr Pepper should cost. A one-way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant difference between the groups, $F(1, 58) = 1.61$, $p = 0.210$.

However, descriptive statistics suggested a trend: the low-control group assigned a higher average price ($M = 2.99$ PLN, $SD = 1.78$) than the high-control group ($M = 2.55$ PLN, $SD = 0.69$). Furthermore, in the low-control group, 17% of participants estimated the product's price to be substantially higher (e.g., 5 PLN, 6 PLN, or even 10 PLN), while in the high-control group, the estimated prices were generally close to the market value of approximately 2.50 PLN at that time, with a maximum of 4 PLN. These findings offer partial support for Hypothesis 3.

Purchase Intention

To examine differences in purchase intention, a one-way ANOVA was conducted using responses to the direct question: '*Would you buy Dr Pepper?*' The results showed no significant difference between the groups, $F(1, 58) = 1.107$, $p = 0.297$. Participants in the low-control group ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 2.67$) did not significantly differ from those in the high-control group ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 2.97$).

However, a significant difference emerged when an indirect question was used: '*Should the protagonist buy Dr Pepper?*' Participants in the low-control condition were more likely to endorse the purchase ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 2.70$) than those in the high-control condition ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 2.24$), $F(1, 58) = 8.186$, $p = 0.006$.

This indirect measure of purchase intention provides support for Hypothesis 4. Table 1 below presents a summary of all the analyses conducted.

Tab. 1. Means, standard deviations, and ANOVA results by control condition

Variable	Control			Lack of control			ANOVA statistics		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Belief in a lucky product	30	9.400	5.530	30	18.930	8.540	26.330	(1,58)	0.000
Attitude toward the product	30	15.800	4.830	30	18.360	5.680	3.560	(1,58)	0.064
Product price	30	2.550	0.690	30	2.990	1.760	1.610	(1,58)	0.210
Purchase intention	30	4.030	2.970	30	4.800	2.670	1.107	(1,58)	0.297
Purchase intention for the story's protagonist	30	2.930	2.240	30	4.770	2.700	8.190	(1,58)	0.006
Sense of control	30	6.000	2.480	30	5.230	2.010	1.730	(1,58)	0.193

M = mean; *SD* = standard deviation.

5. Discussion of Results

The aim of the present study was to examine whether consumers deprived of a sense of control would be more inclined to believe in the effectiveness of 'lucky' products than those who retained a sense of control. It was expected that individuals experiencing a lack of control would not only show greater belief in the power of such products but also express a stronger willingness to purchase and own them, be willing to pay more for them, and evaluate them more positively. Although not all of these hypotheses were unequivocally confirmed, the results clearly revealed the influence of perceived control on consumer decision-making in the context of superstition-based behaviours.

First, participants who experienced a lack of control were significantly more likely to believe that, in a situation beyond their control, a lucky product could bring them good fortune. This finding is consistent with compensatory control theory, which explains why individuals seek elements in their lives that can restore a lost sense of control, even if that control is only illusory.

When the need for control is frustrated, individuals may compensate for this deficiency through various external sources: faith in deities²¹, reliance on government²², belief in conspiracy theories²³, scapegoating²⁴, or the perception of an external enemy²⁵. Similarly, they may turn to products that they believe will bring them luck. A sense of control is so fundamental to human functioning that, in its absence, people are drawn towards illusory associations between unrelated elements of reality. A lack of control can generate anxiety or even depressive symptoms²⁶. Thus, the existence of compensatory mechanisms that help individuals restore a subjective sense of order is crucial, even if such mechanisms do not solve the underlying problem but merely improve emotional well-being. Habitual reliance on these strategies, however, can be maladaptive.

²¹ S. Freud, *The future of an illusion*, in: *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. J. Strachey, London: Hogarth Press 1927/1961, vol. 2, pp. 5–58; A.C. Kay, D. Gaucher, J.L. Napier, M.J. Callan, K. Laurin, *God and the government...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–35.

²² M.J. Landau, A.C. Kay, J.A. Whitson, *Compensatory control and the appeal of a structured world*, 'Psychological Bulletin' 2015, no. 141(3), pp. 694–722; A.C. Kay, D. Gaucher, J.L. Napier, M.J. Callan, K. Laurin, *God and the government...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–35.

²³ J.A. Whitson, A.D. Galinsky, *Lacking control increases illusory pattern perception*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–117.

²⁴ Z.K. Rothschild, M.J. Landau, D. Sullivan, L.A. Keefer, *A dual-motive model of scapegoating: Displacing blame to reduce guilt or increase control*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 2012, no. 102(6), pp. 1148–1163.

²⁵ D. Sullivan, M.J. Landau, Z.K. Rothschild, *An existential function of enemyship*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 2010, no. 98(3), pp. 434–449.

²⁶ P. Quan, C. Feng, Q. Yang, *Lacking control...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1413–1416.

Drawing on the typology of coping styles proposed by Parker and Endler (1990)²⁷, these compensatory responses may resemble different ways of coping with the deprivation of control. The task-oriented style involves active problem-solving and cognitive reframing of the situation. Individuals using this style seek solutions and develop action plans rather than relying on chance. The emotion-oriented style focuses on one's feelings and aims to reduce tension rather than address the problem directly; it often manifests itself in worry or wishful thinking – similar to compensatory strategies for restoring control. Finally, the avoidance-oriented style involves disengagement and the diversion of attention away from the stressor. The boundary between constructive and less constructive coping methods seems to depend on self-efficacy and the perceived ability to influence the situation, a topic warranting further empirical exploration.

Second, the study revealed that individuals deprived of control evaluated the lucky product more positively. They considered it to be good, interesting, of high quality, and likeable. This suggests that people lacking control not only believe more strongly in lucky products but also perceive them as superior and more valuable. Such positive evaluations likely stem from the belief that the product itself can bring good fortune, leading to an automatic enhancement of its perceived quality and other attributes. When control is lost and negative emotions arise, a product that helps relieve tension or provides a behavioural script for making risky decisions may be perceived as particularly appealing.

These findings align with the affective network model proposed by Burke and Edell (1989)²⁸, which shows how emotions elicited by advertising can influence brand and product evaluations. Similarly, Escalas, Moore, and Britton (2004)²⁹ demonstrated that the emotional impact of a narrative is stronger when a consumer becomes 'hooked' by the story and engages their imagination. In the present study, the narrative about friends using a specific branded product served as a form of product placement, embedding the brand within the story's context. A lucky product thus becomes an emotional cue, one to which individuals experiencing a lack of control are especially susceptible.

Third, the study did not confirm that participants lacking control were willing to pay more for the lucky product. However, other interesting patterns emerged.

²⁷ J.D. Parker, N.S. Endler, *Coping with coping assessment*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 1990, no. 58(5), pp. 844–854.

²⁸ M.C. Burke, J.A. Edell, *The Impact of Feelings on Ad-Based Affect and Cognition*, 'Journal of Marketing Research' 1989, no 26(1), pp. 69–83.

²⁹ J.E. Escalas, M.C. Moore, J.E. Britton, *Fishing for feelings: A hook helps!*, 'Journal of Consumer Psychology' 2004, no. 14(1–2), pp. 105–113.

The data suggest that a sense of control supports more accurate price estimation. The absence of significant differences might be due to the wording of the question. Future studies could replace 'How much should a can of Dr Pepper cost?' with 'How much would you be willing to pay for a can of Dr Pepper?' The latter phrasing would measure subjective willingness to pay, capturing the product's perceived value rather than its market estimation.

The current findings indicate that control enhances cognitive accuracy in price judgements, consistent with the concepts of learned helplessness³⁰ and cognitive exhaustion³¹. When deprived of control, individuals may exhibit cognitive deficits and fail to integrate information coherently³², which could explain the unrealistic price estimates reported by participants in the no-control condition.

Finally, the study found that participants deprived of control did not report a higher personal intention to purchase the lucky product unless the situation was framed indirectly, through the narrative's protagonist. When asked whether the protagonist should buy the product again, those lacking control were more likely to endorse the purchase. This suggests that participants may have identified with the character, projecting their own preferences onto the story. This effect can be explained by illusory causation³³: when an outcome aligns with expectations, people may infer a causal link even when none exists.

Moreover, this result can be interpreted through the lens of attribution theory³⁴. When explaining their own actions, people tend to emphasise situational factors, but when judging others, they attribute behaviour to personal dispositions. Consequently, participants might believe that the protagonist's success was due to the 'lucky' product and that, if they were in the same situation, they too would choose to buy it.

³⁰ M.E.P. Seligman, *Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death*, San Francisco, W.H. Freeman.

³¹ G. Sędek, M. Kofta, *Framework for explaining cognitive deficits in learned helplessness and depression*, 'Journal of Experimental Psychology: General' 1993, no. 122(2), pp. 235–260.

³² K. Hecker, G. Sędek, *Unsolvability problems as a source of learned helplessness: Sequential effects*, 'European Journal of Social Psychology' 1993, no. 29(1), pp. 1–11.

³³ D.M. Wegner, T. Wheatley, *Apparent mental causation: Sources of the experience of will*, 'American Psychologist' 1999, no. 54(7), pp. 480–492.

³⁴ E.E. Jones, R.E. Nisbett, *The actor and the observer: Divergent perceptions of the causes of behavior*, General Learning Press, New York, 1971.

6. Summary

The study confirmed that individuals deprived of control are more likely to believe in the power of lucky products than those who retain a sense of control. They also evaluate such products more positively and perceive them as having more advantages. From the perspective of compensatory control theory, a lucky product can be seen as a symbolic tool that restores lost control and influences future consumer choices.

The results highlight the crucial role of personal agency and compensatory mechanisms in consumer behaviour. This research contributes not only to the application of compensatory control theory in the domain of consumer psychology but also to an understanding of the marketing potential of lucky products and product-placement strategies. These insights are especially relevant in the context of social media, which increasingly serve as a key marketing channel in the digital age.

REFERENCES

- Adorno T.W., Frenkel-Brunswik E., Levinson D.J., Sanford R.N., *The authoritarian personality*, Harper, New York 1950.
- Bandura A., *Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change*, 'Psychological Review' 1977, no 84(2), pp. 191–215, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191>.
- Bruner J.S., Goodman C.C., *Value and need as organizing factors in perception*, 'Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology' 1947, no 42(1), pp. 33–44, <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0058484>.
- Cutright K.M., *The beauty of boundaries: When and why we seek structure in consumption*, 'Journal of Consumer Research' 2012, no 38(5), pp. 775–790, <https://doi.org/10.1086/661563>.
- Czapiński J., *Psychologia pozytywna: Nauka o szczęściu, zdrowiu, sile i cnotach człowieka*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2012.
- Endler N.S., Parker J.D.A., *Multidimensional assessment of coping: A critical evaluation*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 1990, no 58(5), pp. 844–854, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.58.5.844>.
- Escalas J.E., Moore M.C., Britton J.E., *Fishing for feelings: A hook helps!*, 'Journal of Consumer Psychology' 2004, no 14(1–2), pp. 105–113, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1401&2_12.
- Freud S., *The future of an illusion*, in: *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, (red.) J. Strachey, vol. 2, pp. 5–58, Hogarth Press, London 1961.

- Friesen J.P., Eibach R.P., Kay, A.C. Galinsky A.D., *Seeking structure in social organization: Compensatory control and the psychological advantages of hierarchy*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 2014, no 106(4), pp. 590–609, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035620>.
- Gaśiorowska M., Grochowska A., *Lack of cognitive control and conceptual coherence of print advertisements: Illusory pattern perception*, in: *Challenges in an age of (dis)engagement*, Faculty of Economics, Ljubljana 2016, pp. 191–197.
- Hamerman E.J., Johar G.V., *Conditioned superstition: Desire for control and consumer brand preferences*, 'Journal of Consumer Research' 2013, no 40(3), pp. 428–443, <https://doi.org/10.1086/670761>.
- Hecker K., Sędek G., *Unsolvable problems as a source of learned helplessness: Sequential effects*, 'European Journal of Social Psychology' 1993, no 29(1), pp. 1–11.
- Jones E.E., Nisbett R.E., *The actor and the observer: Divergent perceptions of the causes of behavior*, General Learning Press, New York 1971.
- Kay A.C., Gaucher, D., Napier J.L., Callan M.J., Laurin K., *God and the government: Testing a compensatory control mechanism for the support of external systems*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 2008, no 95(1), pp. 18–35, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.95.1.18>.
- Kobasa S.C., *Stressful life events, personality, and health: An inquiry into hardiness*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 1979, no 37(1), pp. 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.37.1.1>.
- Korchin S.J., *Modern clinical psychology: Principles of intervention in the clinic and community*, Basic Books, New York 1976.
- Landau M.J., Kay A.C., Whitson J.A., *Compensatory control and the appeal of a structured world*, 'Psychological Bulletin' 2015, no 141(3), pp. 694–722, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038703>.
- Langer E.J., *The illusion of control*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 1975, no 32(2), pp. 311–328, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.32.2.311>.
- Levine R., Chein I., Murphy G., *The relation of the intensity of a need to the amount of perceptual distortion: A preliminary report*, 'Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied' 1942, no 13(2), pp. 283–293, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1942.9917096>.
- Peluso A.M., Bonezzi A., De Angelis M., Rucker D.D., *Compensatory word of mouth: Advice as a device to restore control*, 'International Journal of Research in Marketing' 2017, no 34(2), pp. 499–515, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2016.06.005>.
- Quan P., Feng C., Yang Q., *Lacking control: Situation valence, effects of perceived control, and illusory pattern perception*, 'Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal' 2011, no 39(10), pp. 20111413–1416, <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2011.39.10.1413>.
- Rothschild Z.K., Landau M.J., Sullivan D., Keefer L.A., *A dual-motive model of scapegoating: Displacing blame to reduce guilt or increase control*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 2012, no 102(6), pp. 1148–1163, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027413>.

- Seligman M.E.P., *Science as an ally of practice*, 'American Psychologist' 1996, no 51(10), pp. 1072–1079, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.51.10.1072>.
- Sullivan D., Landau M.J., Rothschild Z.K., *An existential function of enemyship: Evidence that people attribute influence to personal and political enemies to compensate for threats to control*, 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology' 2010, no 98(3), pp. 434–449, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017457>.
- Taylor S.E., *Adjustment to threatening events: A theory of cognitive adaptation*, 'American Psychologist' 1983, no 38(11), pp. 1161–1173, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.38.11.1161>.
- Thompson S.C., *Intervening to enhance perceptions of control*, in: *Handbook of social and clinical psychology*, red. C.R. Snyder, D.R. Forsyth, Pergamon Press, New York 1991, pp. 607–623.
- Wegner D.M., *The illusion of conscious will*, MA: MIT Press, Cambridge 2002.
- Wegner D.M., Wheatley T., *Apparent mental causation: Sources of the experience of will*, 'American Psychologist' 1999, no 54(7), pp. 480–492, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.54.7.480>.
- Whitson J.A., Galinsky A.D., *Lacking control increases illusory pattern perception*, 'Science' 2008, no 322(5898), pp. 115–117, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1159845>.
- White R.W., *Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence*, 'Psychological Review' 1959, no 66(5), pp. 297–333, <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0040934>.

