

# Necessities and Luxuries in Residential Water Use

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## Rationale for the study

Water in Phoenix is inexpensive; this provides little incentive for residents to conserve water. However, water and climate models predict that water will become increasingly scarce in the future and will need to be conserved. Conservation efforts would be aided by knowledge of which water uses are perceived as necessities and which are perceived as luxuries (Li, Kenrick, Bailey, Linsenmeier, 2002).

## Residential water use survey

### Participants

a. 95 individuals (55 women and 40 men) recruited from an Introductory Psychology research pool participated

### Procedure

a. Participants completed an online survey, they were randomly assigned to one of two conditions—a \$50 vs. \$75 budget.

b. Participants indicate their preferences for water usage across ten categories (e.g. taking 10 minute showers). Categories divided into four levels that ranged in price from \$0.00 to \$10.00.

### Categories were:

- |                    |                   |                                      |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Showering        | • Baths           | • Dishwasher                         | • Washing Machine |
| • Landscaping      | • Toilet Flushing | • Faucets and Shower heads           |                   |
| • Outdoor Watering | • Swimming Pools  | • Native Plant and Animal Protection |                   |

d. After choosing preferences measures, additional measures of their Environmental Orientation using the New Ecological Paradigm (Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, Jones, 2000), and other demographic information were taken.

## Preliminary conclusion

- Indoor water use is consider more of a necessity than outdoor use
- Males are more likely than females to view outdoor water use as a necessity
- Increasing water prices may be effective for reducing luxury water service consumption.
- Spending extra for environmental protection is considered a luxury.

## Addressing the next steps

- This pilot study with college students limits findings to participants that probably do not own their own homes.
- A follow-up study will survey the Metro-Phoenix area to get a broader cross-section of participants. This will provide more variance in age and income as well as other demographics.

## What are the perceived necessities associated with water usage and what aspects are considered luxuries?

### Necessities:

Showering, faucets and shower heads, and toilet flushing. Indoor use.

### Luxuries:

Bathing and swimming pools. Outdoor use.

## Are there gender differences in perceived necessities and perceived luxuries?

### Necessities:

*Males:* Landscaping

*Females:* Faucets and Shower heads

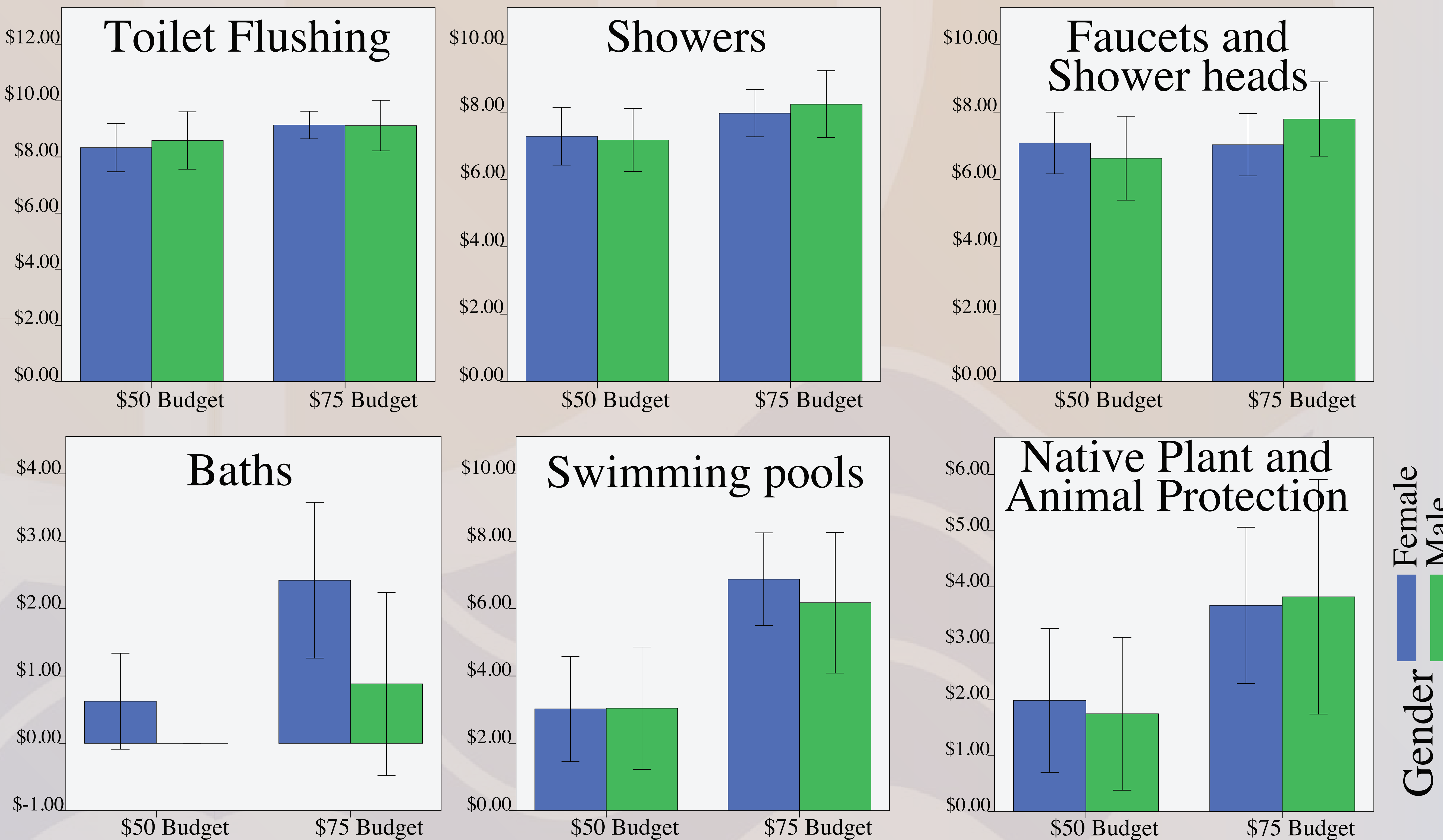
### Luxuries:

*Males:* (no significant findings)

*Females:* Landscaping, Outdoor use

## Does “environmental orientation” influence the perception of luxuries and necessities?

Higher scores on the New Ecological Paradigm scale our correlated with larger contributions towards Native Plant and Animal Protec-



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### References

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