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### Research Result Summaries

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## Highlighting the Role of Natural Stimuli in Consumers` Decision Making; Insights for Marketing Strategies

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## Research Results Summary

Natural environments and imagery are known to have a myriad of effects on people's physical and psychological states. However, little is known about how exposure to nature-related imagery can influence consumers' motivational states. This research investigates the effect of exposure to nature on consumers' regulatory focus. More specifically, we propose that consumers exposed to nature will exhibit stronger promotion-oriented focus and weaker prevention-oriented focus, and as such, these consumers will prefer promotion-framed marketing messages over prevention-framed ones. This research aims to explore a mediating mechanism and a boundary condition for this effect.

A series of six experiments, including an Implicit Association Test, examined the effect of exposure to images of natural objects and scenes (in contrast with non-nature imagery) on consumers' regulatory focus and whether they experienced regulatory fit when encountering promotion- framed (vs prevention-framed) advertising messages.

The results revealed that consumers exhibited lower prevention-focused and higher promotion- focused motivational orientation after exposure to nature. Furthermore, exposure to nature led consumers to experience more regulatory fit with promotion-oriented marketing messages than prevention-oriented ones. This study found that natural environments offer urban consumers a reprieve from their day-to-day life, which mediates the effect of exposure to nature on regulatory focus. This study investigated the boundary condition of engaging in maintenance of nature (e.g. mow the grass) in which the effects of nature on regulatory focus were attenuated.

This research contributes to the understanding of consumers' responses to nature-related imagery in advertising and the effect that nature imagery has on consumers' motivational orientation. This research also contributes to the body of work on regulatory focus by identifying a novel context in which consumers' motivational orientation can be influenced.

The findings have direct implications for marketing managers and other related stakeholders. Exposing urban consumers to nature – even images of nature – they become more receptive to promotion-framed advertisements and marketing communications (vs prevention-framed messaging).

We used text and pictures related to nature as a way to expose the online participants to nature. Future research may use field studies with participants in real natural settings, with expectation of stronger effects. Second, this study examined mostly urban American participants. There may be cultural differences or living situations (e.g. living “off the grid” and in the “wild”) that influence people's relationship with nature. Future research may examine how these differences can affect the influence of exposure to nature on motivational orientation.