

Environmental Psychology Newsletter

Your Affiliation. Your Section. Your News.

Spring, 2014

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Message from the Editor



Lindsay McCunn

Happy spring, everyone! How did 2013 go by so quickly? I suppose, as always, time flies when one is having fun. And I sure had fun

last June at the 2013 CPA convention in Quebec City. It was really wonderful to meet more of you in person and plan the upcoming year with respect to how our newsletter can play a stronger role in further publicizing our environmental psychology section academically, publicly, and environmentally. My sincere thanks to everyone who put forward ideas and comments following the publication of the newsletter last spring!

I hope this new spring issue will interest and inspire you, and that you will pass it along to peers and friends who you think might enjoy the varied articles and overviews submitted by our members (an additional thank-you to everyone who provided work to share – keep it up!).

On the pages below, you'll find a great overview of the conference, along with some extra information about this year's winner of the Robert Sommer award and a lot of business-related info about CPA, and our EP section in particular.

A feature article by Angel Chen is also included in this edition, focusing on the implicit link between luxury and self-interest.

As well, work done by a spiffy group of undergrad students at the University of Victoria is highlighted for winning the APA's Division 34 Undergraduate Research Award in 2013. Good job!

As promised, the "You're Researching What!?" section will be up and running in the next issue. Plus, be sure to check out the information section on submitting to the 'EP in Action' photo contest. I can't wait to see what you come up with!

Happy reading, and I'll see you in June in Vancouver!

Linz

Message from the Chair



Charlotte Young

Happy New Year! Welcome back with a fantastic start of new initiatives. We have many CPA executive updates, photos from the 2013 convention, and proposed presentations to set the pace before the convention in Vancouver this summer.

A complete overhaul of CPA's IT Communications was underway during 2013. Innovations included new network security settings, web-mastering adjustments, and restructuring of the previous custom-built content management system into an open-source platform.

For a period of time, none of CPA's sections had uploading capacity to create new pages and even our listserv was down to prevent real-time info-sharing. Apologies came from content management and they thanked each section for our patience while they successfully won a battle against double hacking. New policy guidelines now include dedicated service providers for all sections.

The delay has meant that most of you missed learning about behind-the-scenes CPA activities. I am happy to share marketing updates and promotional proposals that have been strongly emphasized. Read on for a lot of information - this newsletter is a long one!

We have a lot of executive ground to cover in this promotional and marketing-focused newsletter. Important updates include:

- i) Results of two CPA business meetings
- ii) Information about a new membership drive and contest initiative
- iii) Our section's next election
- iv) A review of the 2013 convention
- v) Overview of the fall conference on career development, and
- vi) Some early info about speakers for the 2014 convention.

In general, the EP section continues on an environmental activism platform as an ongoing theme from 2013, and we have new promotional ideas for increasing our membership. Our section requires some urgent action in bolstering membership, so we invite you to participate in our contests and challenges for increasing public awareness and for meeting our merchandising goals.

Looking forward to 2014,

Charlotte

Message from the Chair-Elect



Lisa Nisbet

Environmental psychology has been a popular news topic over the past year. We'd like to hear about the accomplishments of environmental psychology section members. Below is just a sample of some of the media attention our discipline has received in recent months.

Interest in the health and happiness effects of exposure to the natural environment led to

media coverage of the Suzuki Foundation's 30x30 Nature Challenge, as well as several CBC programs featuring current research on nature's benefits. In July, CBC radio show's "Think About It" devoted an entire episode to the effects of nature on human health and well-being. The program included interviews featuring Toronto neuroscientist Marc Berman, Alan Logan (Canadian author of "Your Brain on Nature"), and yours truly, environmental psychologist Lisa Nisbet, discussing how nature improves physical and psychological health:

<http://www.cbc.ca/thinkaboutit/episodes/2013/07/29/the-natural-brain/>

Research on green exercise and the advantages of outdoor workouts were the topic of a Toronto Star article on October 11, 2013:

http://www.thestar.com/life/health_wellness/2013/10/11/working_out_in_great_outdoors_like_exercise_squared.html

In November, CBC's "Ideas" explored the role of forests as a source of well-being:

<http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/episodes/2013/11/25/the-witness-trees/>

There has also been increasing coverage in the media about psychological aspects of environmental issues. Dr. Robert Gifford's work on the psychological barriers to action on climate change appeared in Time magazine's August article on the human dimensions of this global challenge:

<http://science.time.com/2013/08/19/in-denial-about-the-climate-the-psychological-battle-over-global-warming/>

Plus, our newsletter editor, Lindsay McCunn regularly blogs about environmental psychology in Psychology Today magazine, online:

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/ienvironment>

Has your research reached the public? Let us know about media coverage of your environmental psychology work! Stay tuned for more, in the future, on "Environmental Psychology In The News" to share or submit for our next newsletter.

Review of the All-Section Chair's Meeting

By Charlotte Young

Out of 32 section invitations, 19 Chairs (including myself and Chair-Elect Lisa Nisbet) attended the 'All-Chairs' meeting on behalf of the EP section. Key discussion points involved approaches to marketing, membership, section promotions, and fundraising.

All sections were encouraged to consider new initiatives for augmenting membership. Whether we grow in overall membership, or invite non-psychology specialists to contribute to our section, CPA has no rigid boundaries toward growth. Ways other sections are boosting funding and increasing membership include seeking financial sponsorship from companies (e.g., Adidas corporate donation awards, Scotiabank awards, and third party donations for poster awards). I was happy we were given the green light to encourage innovation. How we inspire non-psychologists, environmental lobbyists, and environmental, interdisciplinary heavy-hitters to join CPA and participate in our section is within our ability and mandate. Specifically, one pilot program could be to expand our student-focused Behaviour Environment Interest Group ('BEInG', or 'Student BEInG') to include corporate, socially responsible, environment-related professionals ('Corporate BEInG').

We were encouraged not to keep our advocacy and research interests confined to psychologists. Comparably, for many years our section's keynote speakers have presented expert environmental research outside of the field of psychology (from human perceptions of built environments, to compromised health in resource industry areas). Our members continue to grow and learn from the interdisciplinary studies of environmental psychology. The antithesis of hearing this encouragement was that while CPA has 1,400 members, our section is on a decline with under 50 members. While our section was represented at this meeting, CPA has begun a task force to evaluate the health of all sections. Headquarters plans to merge sections that are not doing well, or that appear not to have enough interest. The next meeting (March 21-23) gives our section time to launch an incentivized goal to expand our membership. Read on to find out what you can do!

Review of the Section Business Meeting

By Charlotte Young

Our section's business meeting event was a high-spirited discussion extending from the 'All-Chairs' meeting. Marketing and promotion is not an area many researchers are comfortable talking about, but our section is taking on the challenge. We certainly cannot provide any reason to suggest that EP section members are disinterested, or that we do not take action!

Public concerns and objections to Federal government shut-downs of environmental science labs, and the elimination of archived environmental research libraries, are indicators of the critical need for our section to gain public support, increase public exposure, and run with a stronger growth rate. Keeping our focus on environmental activism and marketing our section to recruit new members (ranging from the Ottawa Riverkeepers to urban design architects) is important. So, I proposed a pilot promotional campaign -- a 3-month contest challenge!

To sow some seeds, we can succeed faster and triple our growth if we ask every current section member to strategically work on attracting three environmental experts you would like to join our section. The general idea is that for every three new environmental expert members you enroll, you will earn one contest ticket toward a fun prize in a draw (to be announced at the convention in June). Awards will depend on dollars raised by our members and from increased funds direct-deposited to our secure account at the Bank of Montreal.

By creating a branch of our Behaviour Environment Interest Group (BEInG), we distinguish students from external experts in the 'Corporate BEInG' group. The Corporate BEInG group would encourage professional environmental lobbyists to donate, as members, to our section for mutual learning experiences. The corporate fee would be an annual \$35.00.

This idea seemed to be well received by members -- immediately after the business meeting, a precedent was set with a new corporate donor enrolling from an environmental department of a Halifax municipality!

Need, Supply, and Demand of Psychologists

By Charlotte Young

All section Chairs were invited to a fall conference with an international repertoire of top researchers sponsored by CPA entitled "Summit on Need, Supply, and Demand of Psychologists." While content on the meeting remains confidential, some valuable insights I gained from the 2-day meeting were practical, promotional, and marketing-based.

We learned techniques for how to create demand for our psychology services. For example, plan your career with a focus that shows how you meet specific market needs (especially those not being met). Promote yourself by asking "what is it that I do that is unique?" Take evidence-based research components of your expertise and speak about what environmental psychologists do and can offer. Be thoughtful about who your target market is and how you are going to produce results.

Next, talk to prospective clients and customers in your field of interest. Market your research to a Federal or private agency by stating your solutions to a problem. Ask if all positions are filled in a particular workplace -- if not, persuasively explain how your alternative "niche" research could be of value to them. Remind prospective employers how you have highly transferrable skills as an environmental practitioner, with training in scientific methods, critical thinking, professional writing, applied methodology, and applied communications.

In sum, decisively take forward steps to seek mentorship, obtain market feedback, and aim to meet market demands. Be persistent and remember that most psychologists have three stages of career growth that opportunities branch out from or change into (from the beginning of a career, to a mid-career stage, to the end-of-career phase where goals evolve and priorities change).

The final applied tip for success as environmental psychologists is to remember that the best job opportunities are those that one creates for oneself. When you care about creating value in the world and solving problems, someone will pay for it. The market demand is strong for psychologists having an innovative, research vision.

Membership Drive: 'Everyone Wins Challenge'

By Charlotte Young

Each of our members are invited to 'get active' in a competitive incentive contest in the form of a membership drive. This pilot contest is for our last quarter before the 2014 convention. Every three members you successfully entice into joining our section is an 'entry ticket' to win in a draw. The goal is to bring our membership up to 300.

One way to prevent working in an environmental psychology silo is for EP students to speak to professional, environmental "heavy hitters" at their university, college, municipality, as well as in social corporate interest groups, across Canada. Nothing worthwhile comes without effort, so use your drive, motivation, and leadership skills to enroll passionate colleagues who are environmental innovators that might create value for our section and actively work to resolve environmental problems, and who can help raise the profile of environmental psychology as a field. Start now!

Enticement tools for you to use in marketing membership in our section should be to describe opportunities for networking, access to several exclusive newsletters per year, chances to share research, to discuss ideas, to add value, and to make a difference. Also state that all membership payments are tax deductible (with issued receipts upon request). Remember, every three people you enroll in any category (with BMO Treasurer verification) is rewarded with an incentive ticket to win EP mystery merchandise.

Three categories created for this 3-month pilot contest are now open for our last quarter before the 2014 convention:

1. Behaviour Environment Interest Group (BEInG)
 - a) Graduate student @ \$65.00 annual + \$8.00 section fee
 - b) Undergraduate student @ \$8.00 section fee
2. Corporate Behaviour Environment Interest Group (BEInG) @ \$35.00 annual fee
3. Full CPA member @ \$275 annual + \$15.00 section fee

Everyone's results will vary but actively participating is key. Funds can be direct-deposited into our secure account at BMO (Account No.: 05259 0018201-806). Please email names, categories, and contact information to c.young@videotron.ca.

2014 Section Election

By Charlotte Young

It's election time. The position of Chair-Elect is open to full CPA members! At the next section business meeting at the 2014 convention, current Chair-Elect, Dr. Lisa Nisbet, will officially assume her position as Chair. We hope by then to announce a new Chair-Elect who will serve for two annual convention periods. Past Chair, Dr. Jennifer Veitch, will be conducting the election.

To get you thinking about nominations, allow me to brief you on some transparent incentives you may not have heard about (I am sharing these with you because of how many perks I discovered after I ran for election). The ease of operations in the positions of Chair and Chair-Elect have been enhanced in 2014 with a committee working to put together helpful guides from CPA Headquarters. As of January 2014, dedicated administrative support from CPA Headquarters now assists with all responsibilities.

The main activities as Chair and Chair-Elect involve communications with our 6-person executive and our membership coordinator, reviewing research papers, coordinating budgets with the treasurer, soliciting prominent researchers to be our keynote speakers, preparing a one-page Annual Report, chairing the business meeting, working with the editor to publish newsletters, and performing outreach promotion for our section. It's invigorating!

Some of the perks attached to being Chair and Chair-Elect are the many opportunities for networking, and access to key players within CPA. Brainstorming ideas between experts can be exhilarating. Formation of friendships, mentorships, and career-enhancing possibilities are all invaluable.

Every year, immediately before the convention, the Chair and Chair-Elect are invited to the 'All-Chairs' meeting with a superb dining experience. We receive a token appreciation novelty item along with prearranged early registration to the convention (no waiting in lines).

The Chair also receives one night of casual elegance with a CPA-hosted hotel room at no charge. I pass it forward to share rates over 3 nights with a colleague/student so that we all benefit from a reduced rate). The Chair also takes EP members and keynote speakers out for a special social experience up to \$200.00. A minimum of one additional invitation is extended to attend the fall conference to brainstorm ideas, dine, and learn from the best researchers in the field. It's superb!

Marketing Materials for Promotion: A Call for Teaching Symbols and Logos

By Charlotte Young

Our section is under-promoted in terms of its logo, crests, pins, t-shirts, caps, ties, and so on. Thanks to the historical memory of our treasurer, Mark Sandilands, the last attempt at having a logo was 8 and 17 years ago (see Figures 1 and 2, below).

We have a savvy, purposeful, product design submission for 2014 (Figure 3, below) meant to entice the public to ask: "What does environmental psychology mean?"

"Environmental Psychology" is displayed in bold, trail-blazing lettering to position our section as influential and strong. The arms of the PSI symbol personify 'force' behind a balanced, environmental scale of justice, preventing tipping points. The green triangles represent professional pride in upholding our interdisciplinary field in activist solidarity. It would be called a 'teaching symbol' and not a logo.

Eventual plans at CPA's Headquarters is to find a way to work the official CPA logo (Figure 4, below) in a manner that will identify individual sections. However, those plans are only in development.



Figure 1, from 1997



Figure 2, from 2006



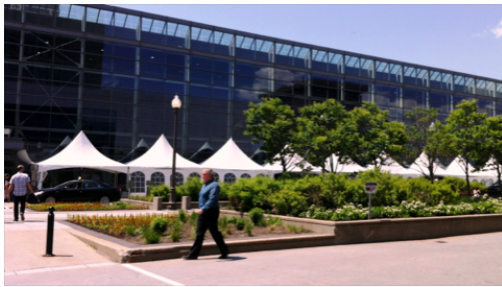
Figure 3, proposed for 2014



Figure 4, official CPA logo

CPA Convention 2013

A Review of EP Section Events (by Charlotte Young)



Convention Centre in Quebec City

The most recent CPA convention in 2013 was marked by continuing our stealthy tradition of having two keynote speakers (one keynote as usual, who receives a waived convention fee, and one 'invited address/workshop'). We started this tradition to increase our informational experience in place of having a formal reception/social. In place of a formal reception, we arrange a field trip for members and keynotes. In 2012, we toured Point Pleasant Park devastated by Hurricane Juan and resuscitated by Dr. Duinker, Professor and Director of the School for Resource and Environmental Studies. In 2013, we went on a culture walk and pub crawl in Quebec City.

Another social activity in 2013 was an adventure to Relais de Pins (the Quebec City Sugar Shack) for traditional cuisine and folk music. An environmentally-focused presentation on how trees produce maple sap that is transformed into maple products was the attraction before tasting taffy cooled on snow, followed by a desert of maple sugar pie!

Plus, attendees received gifts of handcrafted wooden musical spoons.



Section Members at Relais de Pins

Our keynote speaker was Ken Church (from the CanMet Energy Research Centre at Natural Resources Canada) and we all enjoyed hearing his excellent presentation on transition guidelines for low carbon communities on SMORES (Systemwide Methodology for Optimising Renewable Energy Solutions).

His pilot study included 34,000 community participants and aimed to investigate how climate change and resource transition to wind, solar, and biomass, could be psychologically accepted. The motive of the work is to create public desire to voluntarily move away from fossil fuels.

Ken had a great turn-out and an active discussion about how the infrastructure across Canada is in dire need of repair

(and how to make transitions happen at the community-level).



Ken Church's Keynote Presentation



Audience Members at Ken Church's Presentation

As an interesting follow up to Ken's presentation, section member Jennifer Veitch has supplied a summary of work that her colleague Guy Newsham did as part of the SMORES project that Ken Church spoke about at the convention. In fact, Ken briefly alluded to this research and how it is a great example of how to apply psychology skills in a nontraditional way. Keep reading!



CPA Convention 2013, Continued

A Review of EP Section Events

A Model of Residential Energy End-Use in Canada: Using Conditional Demand Analysis to Suggest Policy Options for Community Energy Planners

By Guy R. Newsham and Cara L. Donnelly, National Research Council Canada

This research was part of a larger project entitled “System-wide Methodology for Optimising Renewable Energy Solutions (SMORES),” led by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan). The goal of SMORES was to investigate the socio-economic benefits of integrating energy technologies into a community. Within this framework, our task was to develop a model to predict the effect of the deployment of energy-efficient appliances and behaviours.

The data for our analysis came from the 2007 administration by Statistics Canada of the Households and the Environment Survey (HES), completed by 21690 Canadian households. The survey consisted of more than 300 questions on

dwelling and occupant characteristics, energy use, water, fertilizers and pesticides, recycling and composting, indoor environment and air quality, and transportation and gasoline use. In addition, in 2007, a subset of 9773 HES households completed a supplementary questionnaire on Energy Use (EUS). The EUS consisted of more than 300 questions on dwelling and occupant characteristics, household appliances, and HVAC equipment. Importantly, the EUS also obtained energy use data for electricity, natural gas, oil, propane and wood.

We applied the regression technique Conditional Demand Analysis (CDA) to estimate the typical annual energy use of various electrical and natural gas appliances. In particular, we derived the energy reduction effect associated with some appliance upgrades and behaviours. Specifically, replacing an old (>10 years) refrigerator with a new one was estimated to save 100 kWh/yr; replacing an incandescent lamp with a CFL or LED lamp with a similar light output was estimated to save 20 kWh/yr; and, upgrading an old central heating system with a new one (electricity or gas) was estimated to save 2000 kWh/yr. This latter effect was similar to that of reducing the number of walls exposed to the outside, by encouraging the development of semi-detached houses, or detached houses with attached (and unheated) garages. We also estimated the effect of some thermostat behaviours.

Reducing the winter thermostat set point during occupied, waking hours was estimated to reduce annual energy use by 200 kWh/oC-reduction, and lowering the thermostat setting overnight in winter relative to the setting during waking hours (night-time setback) was estimated to reduce annual energy use by a similar amount. To put this in context, median household electricity use was just under 10000 kWh/yr.

In addition, we developed ownership models and behaviour propensity models based on socio-economic and demographic variables, dwelling characteristics, and local climate. Community energy planners could use these models to estimate the existing appliance inventory and behaviour propensities in their jurisdictions. They can then use the CDA model results to estimate the potential energy savings of modifying the appliance inventory or changing behaviours. This estimate will help to identify incentives and policies most likely to be cost-effective.

For the full paper, see:

Newsham, G. R., & Donnelly, C. L. (2013). A model of residential energy end-use in Canada: Using conditional demand analysis to suggest policy options for community energy planners. *Energy Policy*, 59, 133-142.

CPA Convention 2013, Continued

A Review of EP Section Events (by Charlotte Young)

Finally, Dr. Manual Reimer was our section's invited address, along with Ada Lockridge. We were all emotionally moved hearing Ada discuss the community impact of 14 chemical companies around her home. Most of us had no idea of the psychological affects an Aboriginal community living so close to a major petro-chemical company goes through. It became obvious that Aboriginal people experience much environmental injustice related to energy projects on their territory, as demonstrated through the AAMJIWNAANG First Nation protests.

Youth leading environmental change movements like "Idle no More" show no sign of slowing. This talk gave audience members hope that through continued awareness we might all contribute to make necessary environmental changes.



East meets West: Colleagues from across Canada present their research at an EP section symposium (Nicole Aitken, Karine Lavergne, Katherine Arbuthnott, and Andrea Scerbe)



Dr. Reimer's Presentation

We also had a great turn out for poster presentations and symposiums. Thanks again to all those who presented, listened, and learned!

Robert Sommer Award 2013 Winner

Congratulations to PhD Student Maxine Crawford, from the University of British Columbia - Okanagan, for winning the third annual Robert Sommer Award. The title of her paper is "Innoculation by Nature: Effects of Exposure to Nature on Subsequent Stress, as Moderated by Personality and Connectedness to Nature." An extended abstract of her work is included next. Please contact her for references.



Interview with Ada Lockridge

Dr. Manual Reimer's presentation also exuded activism. He demonstrated how to encourage youth to become leaders in environmental change, build their competence for action, engage in civil and political activities, organize protests, contact politicians, and provide role-modeling through peer support.



Student Poster



Innocation by Nature: Effects of Exposure to Nature on Subsequent Stress, as Moderated by Personality and Connectedness to Nature

By Maxine Crawford, PhD Student and 2013 Robert Sommer Award Winner

Area

Although strong evidence exists demonstrating individuals recover faster from stressful events when they are subsequently exposed to natural elements, very little research has examined whether exposure to nature can be used to prevent or mitigate the effects of future stress. Thus far, the examination of nature as a buffer against future stress, has been limited to correlational studies or studies that include a stressor before and after the nature intervention.

If you would like to find full details on the research Peter presented, the following will come in handy:

Context

Passive exposure to nature influences our physical and mental well-being. For instance, exposure to nature can increase recovery from illness, have therapeutic benefits for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, improve cognitive recovery, increase longevity⁸, and improve health. As well, exposure to real or virtual

nature can reduce stress¹⁰ and may buffer other stress-related health complaints.

The evolution-based theories focus on faster recovery from stress in natural settings versus urban settings. What is not addressed by these theories is whether nature can be used to inoculate against stress. Empirical work has focused on initiating stress in participants and then placing them in natural or urban spaces to recover. The present study reversed the order of exposure, and examined whether individuals exposed to a nature and urban stimulus

responded differently when subjected to a subsequent stressor.

The concept of investigating nature to inoculate stress is not new. Correlational studies often use the language of buffering to espouse the benefits of exposure to green space. For instance, the amount of green space within 1 km or 3 km radius around a person's home has a positive association to their overall health, particularly for people who spend more time at home (i.e., lower SES, children, and the elderly). There is conflicting research as to whether the advantages are more associated with mental benefits, or physical benefits but the overall message is that green space around your home improves both your physical and mental well-being. Other correlational studies report that a view of nature from an office window buffers stress and the intention to quit, as well as reduces physical illness and improves job satisfaction. As the studies are correlational with no experimental manipulation, the direction of influence cannot be confirmed. It's plausible that the exposure to nature provided a restorative environment in which individuals recovered from stress, rather than creating a buffer from stress.

The present study investigated whether inoculation occurs when an individual is not stressed. In other words, when people are at a normal level of stress, can exposure to nature prevent or reduce the effects of subsequent stressors. Inoculation is alluded to in some studies, but only one study has attempted to empirically test it.²⁰ Although they found an inoculative effect, the results were not conclusive as they still subjected participants to an initial stressor.

Methodology

In a controlled laboratory environment, 206 undergraduates completed self-report measures: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory²¹ (STAI), the Connectedness to Nature Scale²² (CNS), the NEO Personality Inventory – Revised²³ (NEO PI-R), and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule²⁴ (PANAS). As well, their heart rate (HR) and diastolic (DBP) and systolic blood pressure (SBP) was assessed before

and after watching one of three videos, and also before and after viewing emotionally negative pictures. The majority of participants were female (61%) and 98% of the participants were between the ages of 17-25 with 2% between the ages of 26-34.

Participants were randomly assigned to three conditions based on the 10-minute video they watched (nature, urban, or control) prior to exposure to the stressor. Following the video, all participants viewed the same 26 photos from the International Affective Picture System database. The photos were chosen to elicit moderate arousal and negative valence.

Moderated multiple regression (MMR) was used to assess whether personality and connectedness to nature moderate the inoculative effects of virtual nature and urban exposure on subsequent emotional stress. A moderator is a variable that has an impact on the direction or strength of the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables.²⁵ MMR is particularly useful when an intervention is not consistent, or when an intervention may only benefit certain people.²⁶ To assess the inoculation effects using MMR, a gain score for pre and post photos was calculated to assess changes in HR, DBP, and SBP.

Results

Prior to examining for moderator effects, a main effects analysis for the criterion variables was completed. No significant relationships were found. MMR was conducted as it is often used in situations where a relationship is inconsistent or weak. The primary focus of the current study was to investigate the potential moderated effects of individual differences on nature exposure and stress, and it was anticipated that the linear regressions might not be significant.

Personality did moderate the effects. Individuals high in neuroticism had a significant reduction in positive affect when exposed to virtual urban videos, and individuals high in openness had a

significant reduction in diastolic blood pressure when exposed to a virtual nature video. No significant findings were found for agreeableness, conscientiousness, connectedness to nature, heart rate, or systolic blood pressure; although systolic blood pressure statistics approached significance (.053) and had congruent findings with diastolic blood pressure.

Conclusions and Implications

Exposure to virtual nature may have inoculative benefits to subsequent stress, but only for people with certain personality profiles. Future research on duration of exposure, exposure to real nature, and exposure to various stressors is necessary to define under what circumstances inoculative effects take place.

Assessing whether virtual nature has an inoculation effect on subsequent stress could initiate cost-effective interventions aimed at improving the health of the general public and marginalized populations. Socioeconomic factors often limit individuals who live in poverty or poor health from seeking healthy behaviours. If virtual nature offers inoculation to stress, the intervention could be implemented within an individual's home, public health offices, long-term care facilities, and mental health institutions, and could potentially utilize existing technology.



FEATURE ARTICLE

The Implicit Link between Luxury and Self-interest

By Angel Chen, PhD Candidate



Angel Chen

Despite concerns for the state of global economy and environment, appetite for luxury goods has remained robust. Luxury goods create

an environment, from business settings, casinos, to retail stores, which implicitly conveys certain moods, values, and norms. Do luxury goods have consequences on people's judgment and behaviour? Before proceeding to this inquiry, it is worthy to examine the concept of luxury.

Historically, luxury was conceptually denoted by the Ancient Greece as a pejorative term that expresses endless desires

for prestige, money, and sex (Berry, 1994). With the rise of Christianity, luxury was associated with woman and sin, in the form of mythology that Eve seduces Adam to pluck the fruit of the forbidden tree. The longstanding relation between luxury and women indirectly persists in, and is reinforced by, the use of sexual appeals in advertisements today.

Luxuries are objects of increasing personal desires beyond basic functionality

(e.g., Kemp, 1998). In other words, they are progressive refinements of basic human needs, rather than objects purported to relieve states of discomfort. The notion of luxury implies a motivation to focus on self-directed hedonist gratification, characterized by feelings of bliss and ecstasy for the self, as opposed to other-directed pleasures that emphasizes relational qualities of loving and care.

In a brain study (Schaefer & Rotte, 2007), exposure to luxury goods activated medial prefrontal cortex, a brain region that plays a significant role in self-relevant processing. In another study (Chua & Zou, 2009), participants primed with luxury items were more likely to make self-interested business decisions that benefit themselves but can potentially harm others and the environment.

I see two major gaps in research on the implicit link of luxury and self-interest. One key limitation is the extensive reliance of self-reports. A critical question remains as to whether the mere presence of luxury goods has an effect on behaviour. Previous research has revealed some evidence of priming on behaviour in other contexts. For example, participants who were exposed to business object, such as briefcases, were more likely to interpret ambiguous situations as competitive and were more likely to collect money for themselves in an ultimatum game (Kay, Wheeler, Bargh, & Ross, 2004). Another under-researched question is whether luxury goods influence interpersonal behaviour and social interaction. If luxury is linked to self-interest, it is a natural next step to analyze the situational and interpersonal processes involved.

A study I recently conducted examined how luxury priming affects social preferences. According to the social value orientation (SVO) framework, individuals' social motivation determines the relative weight of outcomes they assign to themselves and others and influence strategies and choice behaviours in resource distribution (Messick & McClintock, 1968). Accordingly, a DM may exhibit one of six SVOs: individualism, competition, egalitarianism, cooperation, altruism, and aggression.

One hypothesis was advanced: Exposure to luxury goods increases one's propensity to assign more valuable outcomes to themselves than to others. To test this, 55 undergraduate students at the

University of Victoria in British Columbia, viewed either images of luxury (e.g., a Rolex watch) or functional goods (e.g., a Casio watch). To assess impacts of these primes on social choice behaviour, two measures were employed: The SVO slider measure (Murphy, Ackermann, & Handgraaf, 2011), a decomposed game, and a modified dictator game. The SVO slider consists of six primary items, with each represents a continuum of joint payoffs. For each item, participants decided an allocation choice that assigns money to themselves and another anonymous person. Choices of distribution allow classification of social preferences. In the modified dictator game, participants entered into a lottery with a cash prize of 50 dollars. Participants played the role of "the proposer" who determined how much to allocate the prize between themselves and "the responder," an anonymous other who simply accepts the proposal.

Results indicated a significant effect of luxury primes on participants' social preferences and their allocation of the lottery prize. Although most participants were categorized as pro-socials, a more sensitive, continuous measure of SVO (computed as the SVO) detected that the payoff choices made by participants in the luxury condition were less pro-social than those in the non-luxury condition. In the modified dictator game, participants in the luxury condition also kept more money for themselves than those in the non-luxury condition.

This study has several important implications. First, it demonstrates the link of luxury and self-interest beyond self-reports: Mere presence of luxury items increased individuals' propensity to retain valuable resource such as cash money. Second, although SVO has been studied extensively as a personality variable, this study suggests a crucial role of situation norms, specifically those defined and activated by luxury goods, can influence individuals' social motivation. Third, in institutional settings such as business boardrooms, where stakeholders with conflicting interests

conduct negotiations and make resource allocation decisions, surrounding money and luxury facilities may impact competitive social judgments and interactions. In the midst of environmental crisis and Wall Street excesses, the approach of situational contexts and the implicit exposure of material objects, rather than exclusive focus on individuals' perceptions and motivations, may bring additional insights to crucial environmental and social issues.

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Feature Undergraduate Article

“Impact of Message Framing on Climate Change Attitudes and Behavioural Intentions: How Framing Affects the Likelihood to Engage in Pro-Environmental Transportation” By Jasmine Johal, Michael Lu, and Amanda-Lynn Haldorson



From left to right: Michael Lu, Jas Johal, and Robert Gifford (Amanda-Lynn Haldorson was absent for the photo)

With dire projections of global temperature increases on the horizon, promoting pro-environmental behaviour to decrease the human contribution to climate change is crucial. As part of a research seminar course at the University of Victoria, our three-member team conducted an inquiry into climate change attitudes, with a focus on transportation's contribution to environmental degradation.

Through administration of a survey, we investigated the effect of location-based framing messages (local or global) and health impact-based framing messages (health-of-self or health-of-others) on participants' behavioural intentions towards environmentally friendly transportation, general environmental concern, perceived competence, climate change engagement, health impacts, barriers to pro-environmental action, and knowledge of climate change. Students from the Psychology department at the University of Victoria (N = 123) were randomly assigned to one of the four framing conditions, or a control condition.

'EP in Action' Photo Contest

Debuting in the next newsletter will be the first winner of the EP in Action Photo Contest! If you notice something interesting in your daily routine that strikes you as relevant to environmental psychology, snap a photo and send it in! Or, during your work day, you take a picture of your lab mates or colleagues hard at work, send that in too.

Really, anything that shows environmental psychology (or environmental psychologists) in action/at work can qualify. Perhaps the winning photo will spark a great research question? Can't wait to find out...

Send your photos to me (Linz) @ lindsayjmccunn@gmail.com

FEATURED STUDENT ARTICLE, CONTINUED

We hypothesized (a) that the local messaging would elicit greater pro-environmental behavioural intentions than global messaging, and (b) that health-of-loved-ones messaging would elicit greater pro-environmental behaviour than health-of-self messaging. Unfortunately, neither hypotheses were supported, with insignificant differences in behavioural intention scores observed between location-framed conditions as well as health-framed conditions. Gender was investigated as a moderator, with females expected to report stronger pro-environmental behavioural intentions than males; however, this hypothesis also was not supported. Upon improvements in survey length and framing methods in future studies, we hope that implications for research of this nature could include possibilities for message-framing to be used as a tool in advertisements and public service announcements, to promote 'green' transportation and other pro-environmental behaviours.

Although our results did not support our hypotheses, we were very grateful to have received this year's Division 34 Undergraduate Research Award from the American Psychological Association, for our efforts to better understand how framing may potentially influence climate change attitudes and behaviours.

Robert Sommer Award for Best Student Paper, 2014

A Call for Papers

Graduate and undergraduate students conducting research in any aspect of environmental psychology are eligible to enter their research into a competition for the Robert Sommer Award from the CPA Section on Environmental Psychology.

Award submissions will consist of 1000-word extended abstracts of original research for which the student is first author. The submissions need not be papers submitted for presentation at CPA conventions; they may be thesis work, journal papers, or papers presented at other conferences.

Each recipient will receive a certificate to commemorate their receipt of the award and a \$300 prize. The student must be the first author on the project (**due date is March 31, 2014**). Students who would like their work considered for the award must make a submission. This submission should include the following.

1. A cover letter indicating that they would like to be considered for the award.

2. A letter from the student's supervisor confirming that the applicant is a student in psychology and that the applicant's work on the project merits first authorship.

3. A 1000-word extended abstract for Committee Review. This abstract must contain the name(s) and institution(s) of the author(s). The following headings and format should be used:

a) Title

b) Area (briefly state your specific issue)

c) Context (put the research in context by providing adequate background information on relevant scholarly literatures, including references)

d) Methodology (state the design, size and characteristics of the sample, procedure, materials, and statistical tests employed, providing rationale as needed)

e) Results (key findings)

f) Conclusions and Implications

4. Two copies of the abstract should be submitted: one with the authors' names included and one without, so blind reviews may be done.

All materials must be e-mailed with the subject line "Robert Sommer Award" to elizabethnisbet@trentu.ca.

2014 Convention at a Glance

Submissions include 4 symposiums, 4 posters, and 1 proposed keynote and invited address workshop. The social activity is still open for suggestion. More details will be finalized by the next newsletter! Although David Suzuki has a prior commitment, numerous other excellent speakers are available and local to Vancouver:

Our confirmed invited address will be Larry Beasley, C.M., 'Distinguished Practice' Professor of Planning at the University of British Columbia, School of Community and Regional Planning. Dr. Beasley was the Director of Planning for the City of Vancouver during a critical restructuring period for building resiliency of family and community. He is also a global leader in the world of revitalization and transformation of urban-decayed communities. With his 30 years of experience, including social service work with communities, and fundraising, he earned an Order of Canada for his humanitarian contributions.

Our tentative keynote speaker is Stephen R. J. Sheppard, Ph.D., ASLA. Stephen is a Professor and Director of UBC's Collaborative for Advanced Landscape Planning (CALP) where he examines the causes, impacts, and solutions of what global warming will look like in existing and future communities. He has developed a guide to ethical visual communication of climate change using spatial analysis and innovative 3D visualization tools to support social learning, decision-making, and policy change. He is also a pioneer of visioning techniques and processes to develop, analyze, and communicate future scenarios. These tools are useful to municipal, First Nation, and college practitioners.

Hope everyone is getting excited for the event!

Newsletter Submissions

Written submissions – including notices of upcoming events, calls for papers, commentaries, short articles, book reviews, recent publications, teaching, research, and practitioner news – are all welcome. Send submissions to Lindsay McCunn @ lindsayjmccunn@gmail.com

EP Section Website

<http://www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/cpasections/environmentalpsychology/>

If you are interested in getting involved with the section, please contact our Chair, Charlotte Young, at c.young@videotron.ca

2014 Convention Details

June 5th to June 7th, 2013 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver, BC (<http://www.cpa.ca/convention/>)

Stay tuned for the next newsletter for up-to-date information, locations, and times of all of our section's events, symposiums, and poster presentations.