

IC - (21130) - SEEING ATTRACTIVE NATURE AS A MEANS TO DECREASE THE PROPENSITY TO CHEAT

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Background and objectives

In a preregistered online experiment (N = 299; see: osf.io/pu89s) we investigated how the exposure to three different nature conditions (beautiful nature, ugly nature and ugly urban) affects cheating behavior in reporting the outcome of a coin-flip. Participants were informed that upon getting "heads" they would receive a bonus of 0,50 USD upon completion of the survey. Those who got "tails" would not get any bonus. We based our experiment on the premise that attractive nature images can both provide an aesthetic reward and inspire awe (and thus prompt feelings of lesser self), which in turn would encourage more ethical behavior.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Our main analysis was a logistic regression, with the coin flip outcome (heads = 1 and tails = 0) as the DV, and the environmental condition (dummy coded) as the IV. We also tested for moderation of the main effect by BAS Reward Responsiveness, HEXACO Model of Personality Structure (a measure for the traits "Fairness" and "Greed-Avoidance"), and the trait "awe". For this we conducted a multicategorical moderation analysis in PROCESS (model 1), with the coin flip outcome as the DV, the environmental condition as the IV, and BIS/BAS, HEXACO and the trait "awe" as moderators.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

We find that people have a general tendency to cheat, although those exposed to beautiful nature and ugly urban conditions do so less. Moderation analyses show that individuals who score high on BAS Reward Responsiveness and the trait "awe" cheat less, when exposed to the beautiful nature condition. We did not find any statistically significant differences in reporting behavior between either of the three manipulation conditions.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

The findings suggest a link between exposure to beautiful nature and ethical behavior and may have practical value to urban design, good governance and anti-corruption policy agendas.