

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (21371) - KNOWING AND EXPERIENCING THE BENEFITS: FACTORS INFLUENCING RESTORATION EVOKED BY NATURE PHOTOGRAPHS

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Background and objectives

Nature experiences improve well-being. Even viewing nature photographs can lead to some effects. To understand how merely viewing images can promote these outcomes, we investigated whether knowledge about such beneficial effects related to nature experiences predicts restoration after viewing nature photographs.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Therefore, we conducted three online studies with convenience samples (Study 1: $N = 224$, Study 2: $N = 490$, Study 3: $N = 360$). In Study 1 and 2, we manipulated knowledge about physical and mental health effects related to nature experiences before participants viewed nature photographs and rated them for restorativeness (Study 1) or preference (Study 2).

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

In Study 1, knowledge manipulation had no influence, but, in Study 2, we found small effects on preference and restoration outcome. In Study 3, we varied between-subjects the assessment of outcome expectancy. Although the assessment itself did not predict restoration, for the respective sub-sample expected restoration was positively related to actual restoration. Moreover, measured knowledge about beneficial effects of nature and - even stronger - reported restorative effects of the participants' last stay in nature positively predicted restoration evoked by the nature images.

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

Overall, our results show that knowledge about beneficial effects of nature exposure can be predictive for restoration evoked by virtual nature. However, related factors, such as previous experiences and outcome expectation, may play more important roles than factual knowledge.

Palavras-chave : restoration, well-being, virtual nature, knowledge, nature experience