

How does the coast impact stress, coping strategies and pro-environmental attitudes?

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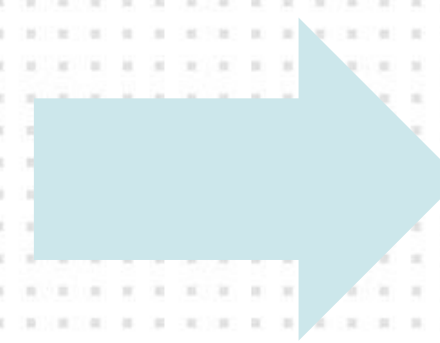
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Introduction

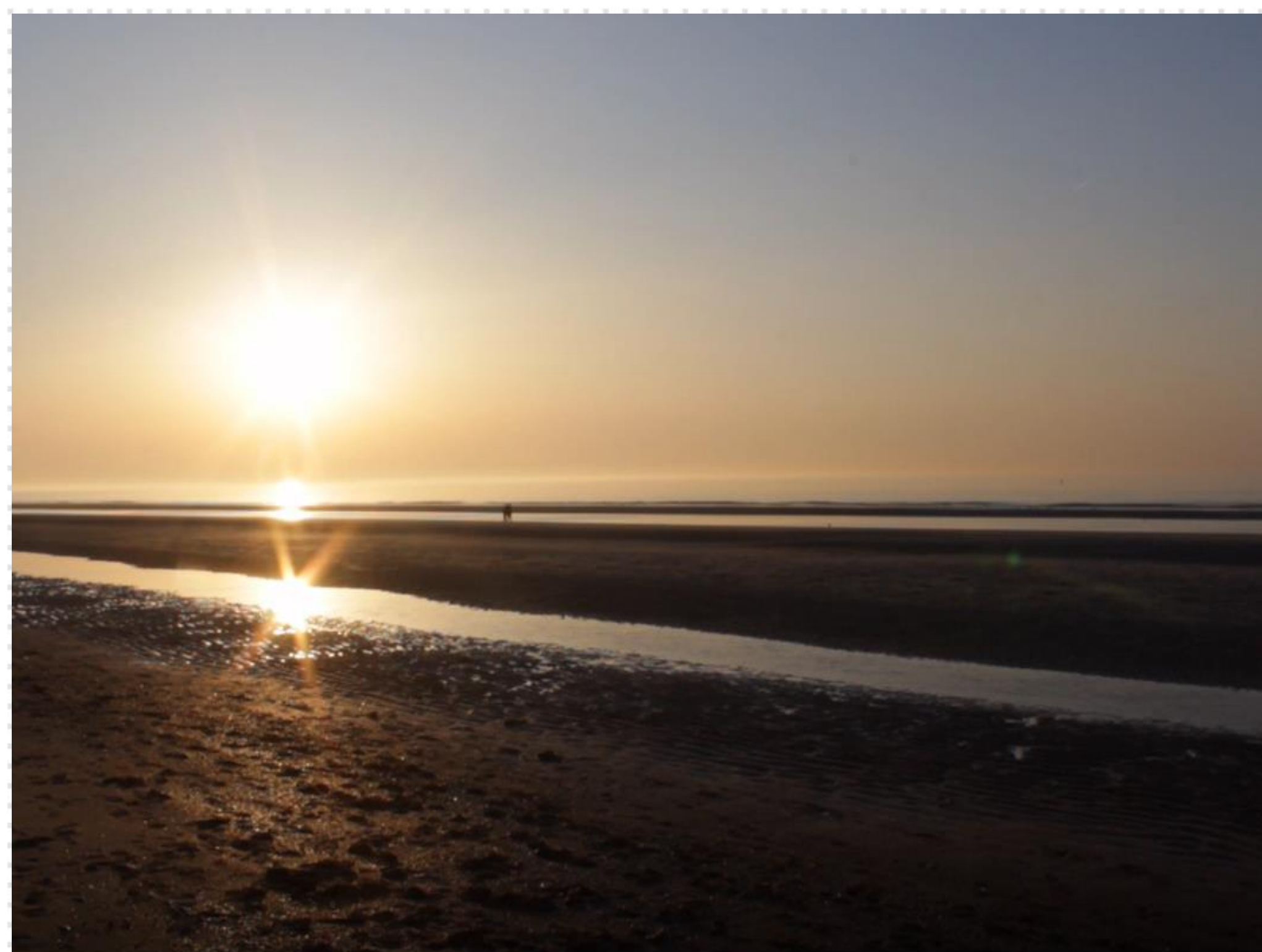
Arising from research on nature and wellbeing, recent studies suggest that exposure to coastal landscapes is associated with improved wellbeing and pro-environmental attitudes. The question remains of why that is and whether elements of pollution (e.g. plastic) potentially disrupt or weaken the benefits of the coastal experience. One potential mechanism could be the emotional experience of awe, nostalgia, and nature connectedness that is triggered at the coast and consequently reduces stress, increases meaning-focused coping strategies, and boosts pro-environmental attitudes.

Aims

1. Assess the effect of exposure to coastal landscapes on stress, coping strategies, and pro-environmental attitudes, compared to exposure to urban landscapes
2. Evaluate the emotional experience of awe, nostalgia, and nature connectedness as potential mediators
3. Evaluate the effect of presence of plastic as a potential moderator



Optimize the coastal experience to benefit human health and protect ocean health



Methods

Outline

- Experimental mixed design through an online survey
- Participants randomly assigned to one of 6 conditions
- Each condition relates to watching a video clip of a particular landscape

Pre video clip

- Measure control variables
- Mentally visualize a past stressful moment for 1 minute
- Report stress level

Video clip

- Watch 3-minute video clip of either **a beach with a sunset, coastal dunes, or an urban street**, either with or without plastic

Post video clip

- Report stress level
- Measure emotions felt during the video
- Measure coping strategies and pro-environmental attitudes

Hypotheses

H1: Exposure to coastal landscapes leads to a higher decrease of stress and a higher increase in meaning-focused coping strategies and pro-environmental attitudes, compared to exposure to an urban landscape

H2: The emotions of awe, nostalgia, and nature connectedness positively mediate this effect of coastal landscapes

H3: The presence of plastic moderates this effect of coastal landscapes by weakening it