

Tackling climate change causes with sustainable behaviors: to relate to environmental problems or to health risks?

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Research Context and Motivation:

- ❖ Unsustainable consumption (such as excessive fossil fuels use) have not only caused environmental problems, but they are also responsible for the majority of health problems in humans (i.e., increased risks for respiratory diseases). Health risks, unlike environmental risks, put oneself in danger and thus are more likely to receive the individual's actions to eliminate or lessen the risk and its causes (White et al., 2019).

Research Question:

- ❖ Are health risks communications more effective in promoting sustainable behaviors compared to environmental risks communications? Why?

Theoretical Background:

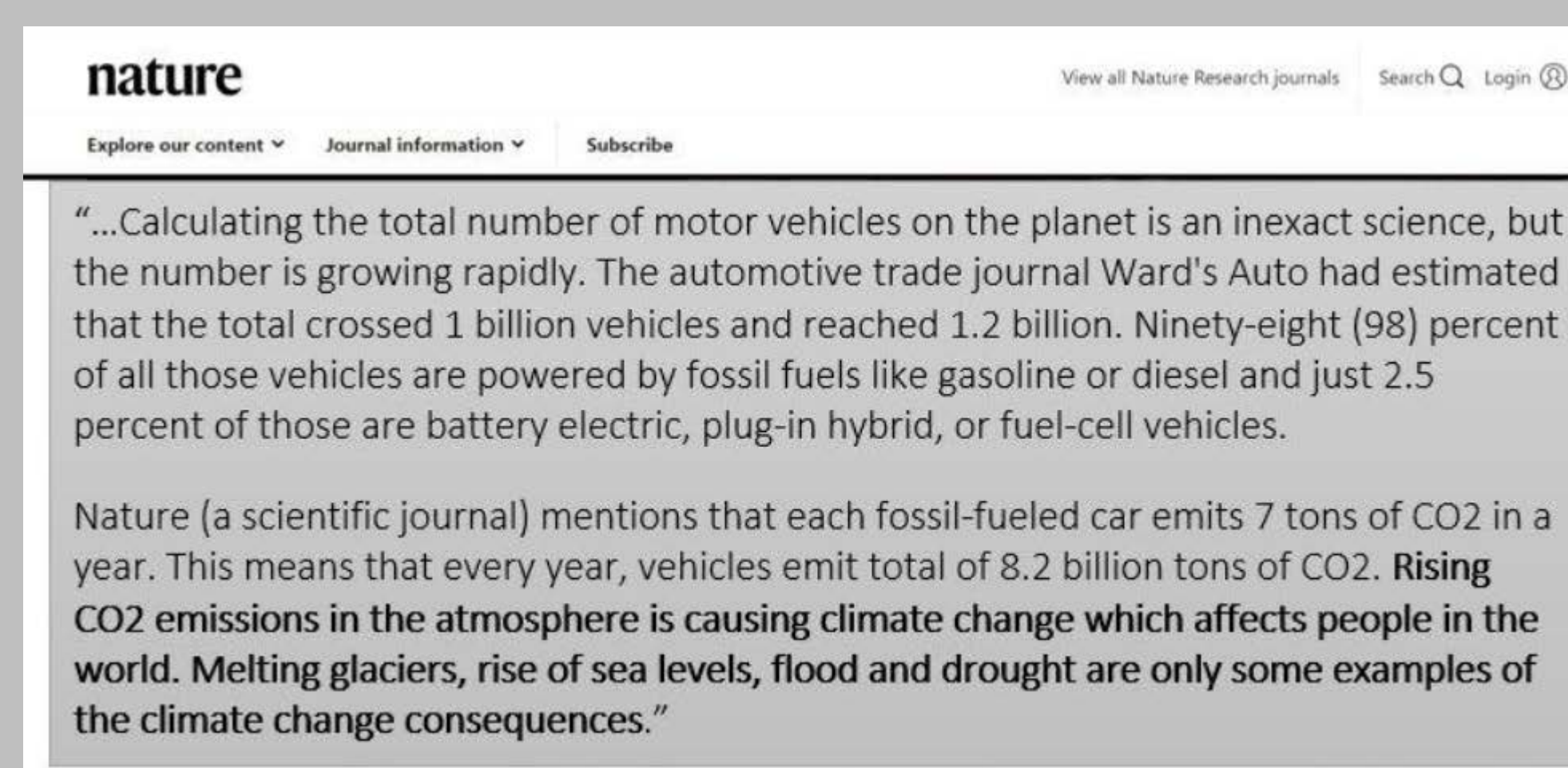
- ❖ We hypothesize that messages including health risks related to the fossil fuel-based cars are more effective in improving consumers' intentions for sustainable transport when compared to messages including environmental risks.
- ❖ Moreover, lowering the health risks is associated with self-benefit and achievement.
- ❖ We expect that higher intention for the sustainable transport, when it is paired with lower health risks, will increase the feeling of pride in individuals (Peter & Honea, 2012).
- ❖ We thus hypothesize that the feeling of pride mediates the relationship between health-related messages and intention for sustainable transport.

Research Method:

- ❖ 337 individuals from the US on Amazon Mechanical Turk were randomly assigned to three conditions (control vs. health consequences vs. environmental consequences).

Stimuli:

Environmental Consequences:

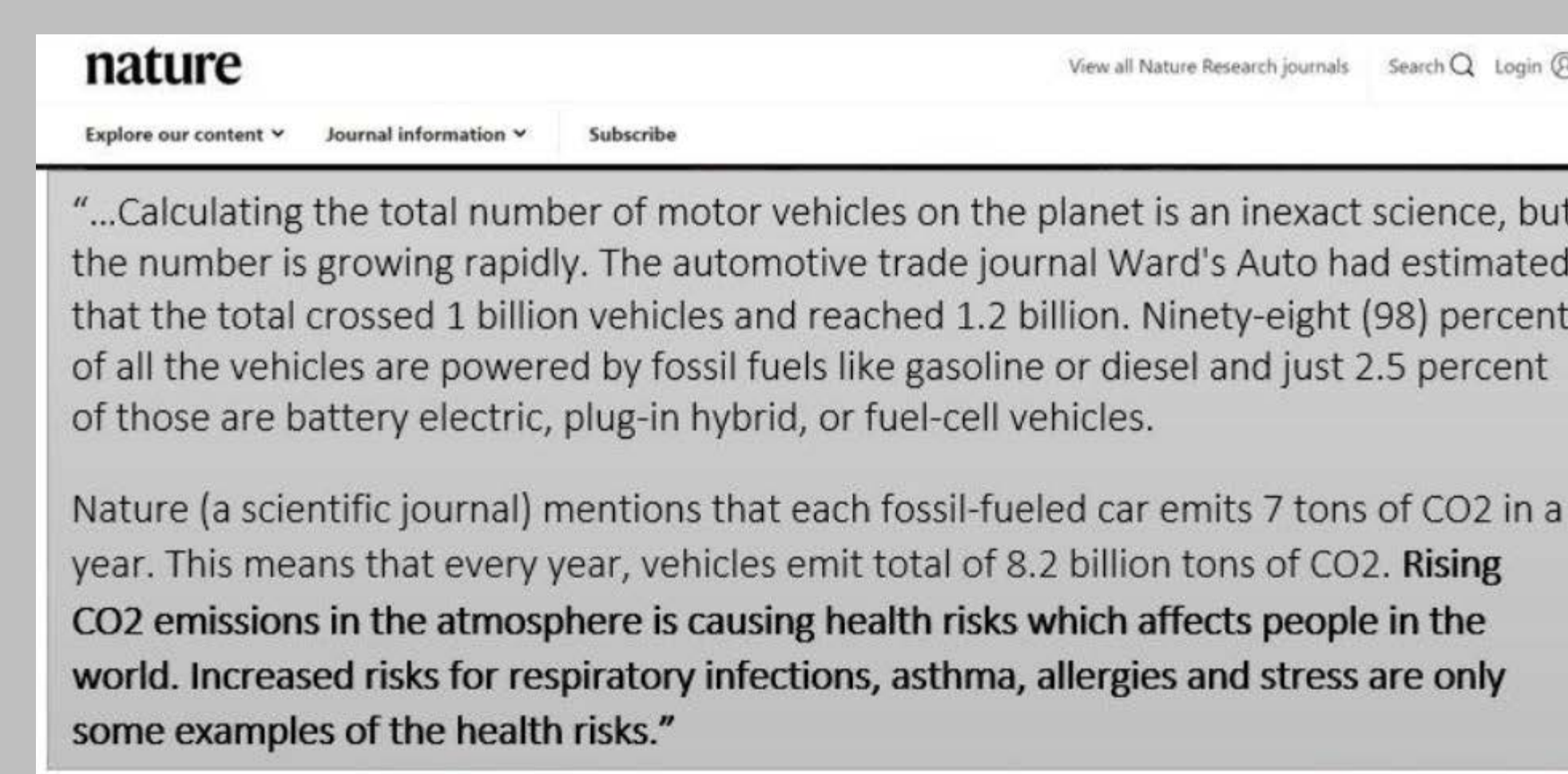


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"...Calculating the total number of motor vehicles on the planet is an inexact science, but the number is growing rapidly. The automotive trade journal Ward's Auto had estimated that the total crossed 1 billion vehicles and reached 1.2 billion. Ninety-eight (98) percent of all those vehicles are powered by fossil fuels like gasoline or diesel and just 2.5 percent of those are battery electric, plug-in hybrid, or fuel-cell vehicles.

Nature (a scientific journal) mentions that each fossil-fueled car emits 7 tons of CO2 in a year. This means that every year, vehicles emit total of 8.2 billion tons of CO2. **Rising CO2 emissions in the atmosphere is causing climate change which affects people in the world. Melting glaciers, rise of sea levels, flood and drought are only some examples of the climate change consequences.**"

Health Consequences:

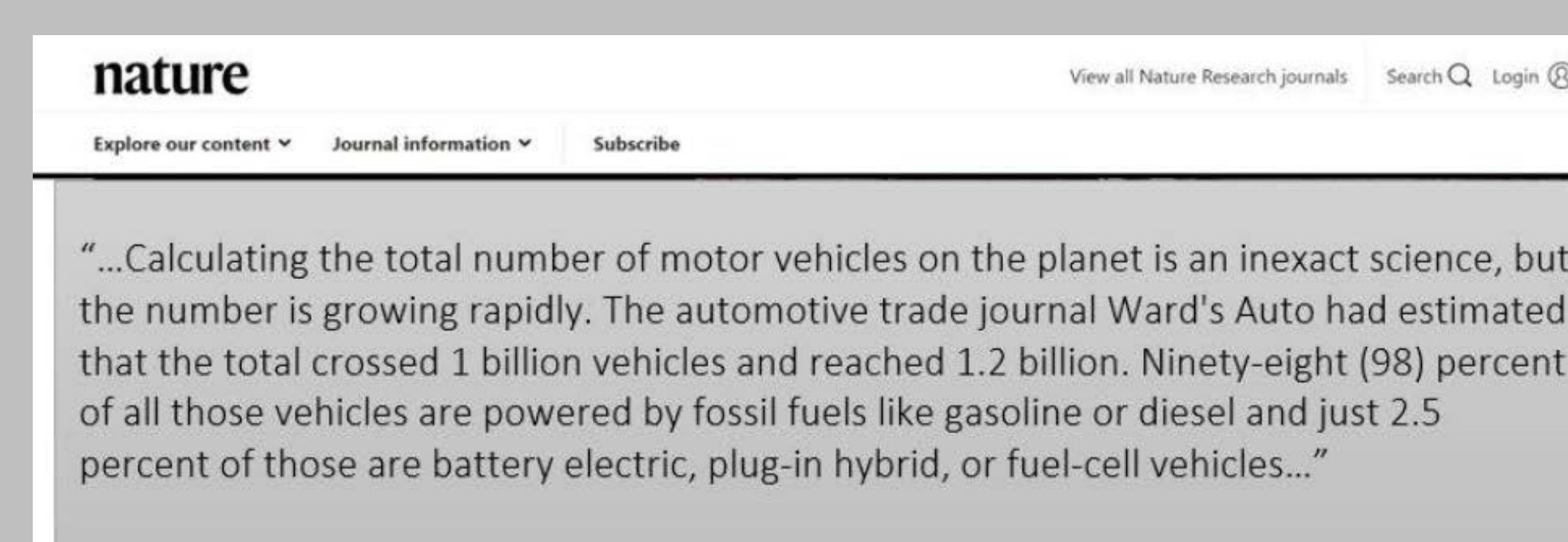


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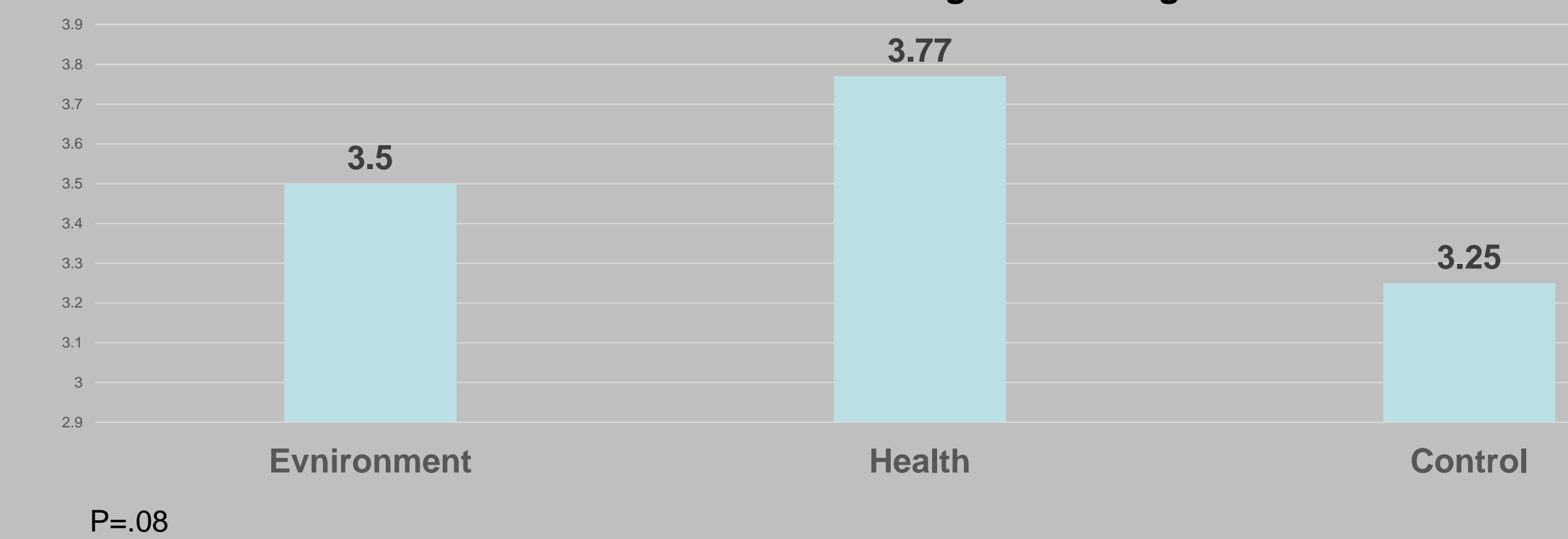
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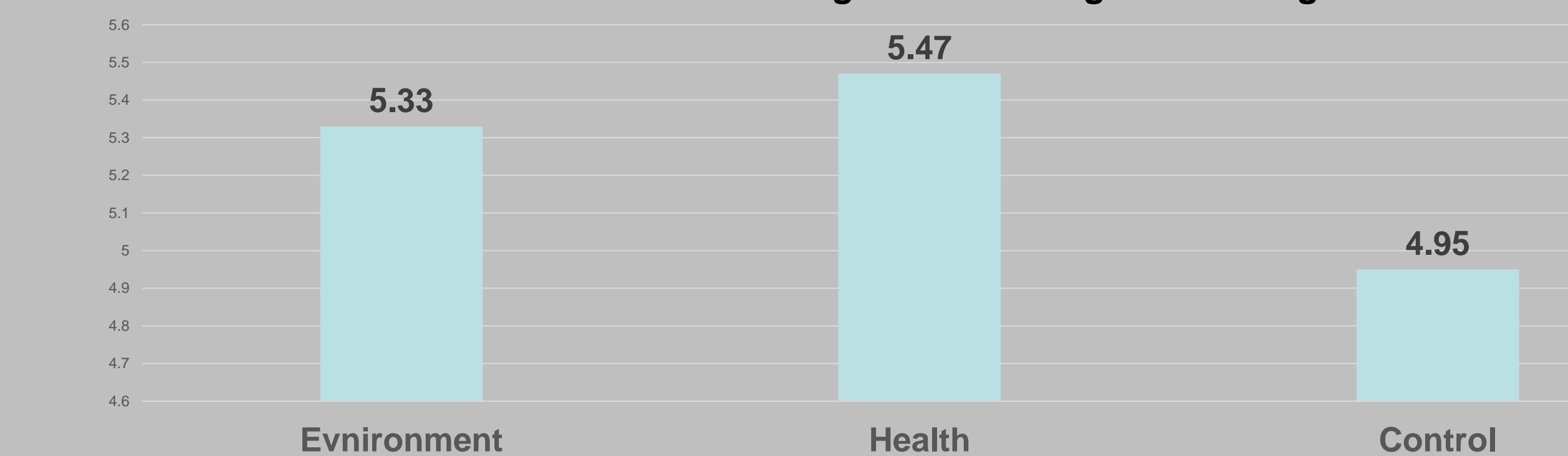
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Likelihood of Using Car Sharing



Likelihood of Feeling Pride in Using Car Sharing



Contribution:

- ❖ Our findings highlight the higher effectiveness of communicating the health consequences compared to the environmental consequences of unsustainable transport on increasing the intention of individuals to adopt sustainable transport (car sharing). Our participants felt prouder when they intended to adopt sustainable transport and when we paired it with lower health consequences (versus environmental consequences).
- ❖ We contribute to the marketing and sustainability literature by investigating the conditions in which communicating health risks versus environmental risks related to the fossil fuel-based car use can increase consumers' intention to adopt sustainable transportation.
- ❖ Our findings have implications for policymakers, environmental organizations and businesses when drafting their communication strategies related to environmental policies and sustainable personal transport.