RESEARCH ARTICLE

Psychology Marketing | WILEY

Using representational and abstract imagery to create regulatory fit effects

Kelly Naletelich[1] | Seth Ketron[2] | Nancy Spears[3] | J. Alejandro Gelves[4]

[1]Department of Marketing, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA

[2]New College, University of North Texas, Denton, Texas, USA

[3]Department of Marketing, G. Brint Ryan College of Business, University of North Texas, Denton, Texas, USA

[4]Department of Operations and Information Technology, William and Mary Raymond A Mason School of Business, Williamsburg, Virginia, USA

Correspondence
Kelly Naletelich, Department of Marketing, James Madison University, 421 Bluestone Drive MSC 0206, Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807, USA.
Email: Naleteka@jmu.edu

Abstract

Visual imagery is one of the most important methods of communicating with consumers, but scholars have generally neglected the role of different forms of visual imagery (representational and abstract). Further, the motivation to engage with and process representational versus abstract imagery has also remained underexamined despite the important role that motivation, particularly stemming from regulatory focus, plays in the consumer domain. Therefore, we demonstrate that prevention-focused versus promotion-focused mindsets guide the interpretation of meanings conveyed by representational versus abstract visual imagery as a nonverbal means to achieve regulatory fit. Four experimental studies— including one controlled laboratory experiment and one online behavioral response study—show that when representational imagery is matched with a prevention-focused and abstract imagery with a promotion-focused mindset or framed message, consumer outcomes are enhanced. Further, we find that perceived risk mediates the results for those with a prevention focus and departure from the status quo for those with a promotion focus.

KEYWORDS
abstract, departure from the status quo, imagery, perceived risk, regulatory fit, regulatory focus, representational

1 | INTRODUCTION

Visual imagery is used in many forms by organizations as one of the most important methods of communicating with consumers. A cursory glance at various types of imagery used across many platforms for visual media—advertising, social media, websites, store signage, and package design, to name a few—yields an interesting finding: some imagery appears more realistic (known as *representational* imagery) and others more *abstract* (i.e., depicting an augmented or stylized perspective of objects). The use of representational visual imagery is widely popular as realistic depictions of products and experiences are the clearest and most direct means of showing visual information (Burns et al., 1993; Rossiter & Percy, 1980).

However, organizations also make frequent use of abstract visual imagery. For example, the BBC created an advertising campaign for the 2018 World Cup with abstract imagery, featuring an animated video titled "the Tapestry" of the best World Cup moments. The campaign was wildly successful, setting a record for BBC across online and TV; the campaign was even termed a work of art and cited as creating a new standard for creative expression in advertising (Gibson, 2019; Webby Awards, 2019). Louis Vuitton has had similar success blurring the lines between art and commerce by turning various stores into art

gallery/retailer hybrids. These hybrid stores often feature abstract art by notable artists and have received wide praise by consumers and media (Ferrell, 2019; Joy et al., 2014; Naiman, 2018; Silbert, 2019). McDonald's is also capitalizing on the use of abstract imagery with its recent advertising campaigns focusing on animated videos (Griner, 2019a) and impressionist art (Griner, 2019b).

Organizations are not the only ones who use various forms of visual imagery. Daily, consumers post images in both abstract and representational forms across social media platforms. Additionally, consumers have begun to express their desire to alter images using augmented reality (AR) to add abstract elements to photos via filters (Hall, 2017; Sallomi, 2018). For example, SnapChat's AR lens studio houses over 400,000 lenses that allow consumers to alter their photos (Talbot, 2019). The trend toward altering photos to appear more abstract is likely to increase as younger consumers, such as Gen Z, place high importance on digital creative expression (JWT Intelligence and Snap, 2019).

Although both representational and abstract imagery are featured prominently in marketing, research has only just begun to explore the implications of these types of imagery for consumer behavior (Naletelich & Paswan, 2018). Thus, an important question remains unaddressed: what influences might consumer characteristics exert on responses to these two types of imagery? Our goal is to initiate a stream of research on this question by investigating a key element of consumer behavior—motivation—and its relation to representational and abstract imagery. Specifically, we rely on regulatory focus theory to explore the interplay between motivation and responses to imagery types. While widely used across marketing papers for the past several years (for a review, see Higgins & Cornwell, 2016), regulatory focus still holds key attraction for marketing scholars and managers. Importantly, consumers can be primed into one of the two regulatory foci (a prevention focus or a promotion focus), allowing managers the ability to appeal to consumer motivation through message framing and achieve regulatory fit (Fazeli et al., 2020; Florack & Scarabis, 2006; Higgins, 1997; Kareklas et al., 2012; Kim, 2006; Lee & Aaker, 2004).

While much prior literature has focused on verbal means of achieving regulatory fit, Motyka et al. (2014) found that nonverbal routes to deliver information to different regulatory-focused mindsets have a significantly stronger effect on consumer evaluations. Further, recent work has examined regulatory fit with death-related imagery (Baek & Yoon, 2020), but nonverbal means of achieving regulatory fit remain much less studied compared to verbal means, and styles of imagery have not been examined in relation to regulatory fit. Thus, through four experiments, our work bridges a unique gap at this uninvestigated intersection.

2 | CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1 | Representational and abstract imagery

While representational imagery seeks to replicate reality by showing objects as they appear in real life, abstract imagery distorts the appearance of objects for symbolic or artistic purposes (Naletelich &

Paswan, 2018; Stokstad & Cothren, 2014). An image of an apple, for example, would be representational if the apple appears the same in the image as in real life. On the other hand, an abstract image of the apple might use unusual colors (such as electric blue instead of the natural reds and greens found in apples), feature altered lines or dimensionality (such as the use of cubic or pixelated styles), or possess reduced vividness of the imagery (as if viewing the apple through a fogged window or rippled glass). Thus, representational imagery offers the clearest picture of visual "reality" by depicting objects in their concrete, natural states. Meanwhile, abstract imagery removes objects from their natural state using elements of imagination and fantasy and is often designed to make artistic statements or evoke certain emotional responses. As such, abstract imagery is more creative in that it offers an inherent departure from the known and conventional, whereas representational imagery is less creative by seeking to preserve or document actual appearances.

Literature in art and psychology offers a variety of insights into how consumers might respond to styles of imagery. Individuals tend to respond differently to representational and abstract art due to a variety of factors, which makes art preferences idiosyncratic (Bubic et al. 2017; Schepman, Rodway, Pullen, 2015; Stokstad & Cothren, 2014; Vessel & Rubin, 2010). Individual influences on these preferences include personality (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2009; Feist & Brady, 2004; Furnham & Walker, 2001; Lyssenko et al., 2016; Pietras & Czernecka, 2018), sensation seeking (Furnham & Avison, 1997; Furnham & Bunyan, 1988), need for closure (Wiersema et al., 2012), culture (Knapp & Wulff, 1963; Nanda et al., 2013), memories (Heinrichs & Cupchik, 1985), and training and experience (Nanda et al., 2013; Pietras & Czernecka, 2018). Further, preferences for representational art are generally consistent across observers, while abstract art receives a wider range of evaluations among consumers due to its more nuanced, idiosyncratic, and interpretive nature (i.e., Nadal et al., 2018; Schepman, Rodway, Pullen, 2015; Sidhu et al., 2018; Uusitalo et al., 2012; Vessel & Rubin, 2010).

This rich stream of linkages to personality traits, individual differences, and other effects has revealed important insights into preferences for and responses to representational and abstract images. However, to date, the marketing domain has offered few insights into how consumers might respond to representational versus abstract imagery in product-related contexts. Naletelich and Paswan (2018) found that purchase intentions are influenced differently by abstract versus representational versus no art in a store environment, and Ketron et al. (2021) found that these two imagery styles affected purchase intentions more strongly for vice (vs. virtue) foods. In another example, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008) found that the presence of high art on a product increased perceived luxury; while the focus of this study was not on representational versus abstract imagery, the art in question was not purely representational. Despite these studies as well as those in art and psychology, research has yet to explore the interplay between representational and abstract imagery and motivational mindsets (such as regulatory focus). We thus explore this interplay in the next section.

2.2 | Achieving regulatory fit with representational and abstract imagery

When considering relevant mindsets in how consumers process or interpret representational and abstract imagery, regulatory focus offers a fruitful avenue of inquiry due to an inherent alignment with what representational and abstract imagery can represent. According to regulatory focus theory, humans are motivated to reach their goals in one of two ways through either a prevention or a promotion focus (Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Higgins, 1997, 1998). Importantly, prior research has established a connection between construal level theory and regulatory focus, such that prevention-focused consumers process information more locally, whereas promotion-focused consumers process more globally (Förster & Higgins, 2005; Lee et al., 2009). As a result, prevention-focused consumers are less (and promotion-focused consumers are more) creative (Baas et al., 2011; Friedman & Förster, 2001). Therefore, from these mindsets, prevention- and promotion-focused consumers approach information processing differently and likely interpret types of imagery in variant ways based on those mindsets. In other words, we posit that because prevention-focused consumers think more concretely and promotion-focused consumers more abstractly, the way that these consumers view, interpret, and respond to representational and abstract imagery are likely to differ from one another because the natures of representational and abstract imagery mean different things to individuals based on their regulatory focus.

In this vein, we argue that representational and abstract imagery afford the opportunity to achieve *regulatory fit*. Regulatory fit theory proposes that when information is presented in such a way as to support and reinforce one's motivational mindset, persuasion is enhanced (Avnet & Higgins, 2006; Cesario et al., 2008; Higgins & Cornwell, 2016; Wang & Lee, 2006). Prior literature has extensively documented regulatory fit effects across a variety of contexts. Most of this prior work has focused on verbal means of achieving regulatory fit, such as message framing, temporal framing/factors, and informational cues. To a lesser extent, scholars have explored nonverbal mechanisms for regulatory fit, including body language, music, and visual elements, and a few works have combined verbal and nonverbal cues to achieve regulatory fit.

Prior scholars have documented some visual means of achieving regulatory fit, such as perspective in an ad (Zhang & Yang, 2015) or the way a victim is portrayed in an ad (Zemack-Rugar & Klucarova-Travani, 2018). Further, Roy and Phau (2014) examined how information presented either analytically (i.e., textually) or visually aligns with regulatory focus, and Zhu and Meyers-Levy (2007) manipulated the ambiguity of peripheral objects around a focal product in an advertisement (all with representational images) to show that prevention-focused consumers engage in item-specific elaboration and promotion-focused consumers in relational elaboration. Additionally, Lee et al. (2009) examined the presence versus absence of metaphors and interpretive aids, again using representational imagery.

To contribute to this avenue of literature, we argue that regulatory fit can be achieved through *different styles* of visual imagery (representational vs. abstract) and how these styles are *interpreted and assigned meaning* based on regulatory focus. That is, our investigation focuses on *distinguishing or comparing the interpretations of different styles of images in achieving regulatory fit*. We contend that the inherent meanings perceived and the responses to representational versus abstract imagery between prevention- and promotion-focused consumers is based on these consumers' relationship with protecting versus moving beyond the *status quo*. Namely, those with a prevention focus are concerned with protecting the status quo and fear regressing below it (i.e., they want to avoid moving from their current state of 0 to −1; Higgins, 2000; Idson et al., 2000). As a result, prevention-focused consumers are motivated by their duties, obligations, and securities and actively monitor their immediate environments for threats to the status quo. In their diligence to monitor the external environment, prevention-focused consumers maintain a local and more analytical mindset, which allows them to see potential threats easily and clearly (Förster & Higgins, 2005; Lee et al., 2009; Roy & Phau, 2014). Further, the characteristic of a local mindset coupled with having less cognitive resources available due to threat assessment results in less creative thought for those with a prevention focus (Baas et al., 2011; Förster & Dannenberg, 2010; Friedman & Förster, 2001, 2002).

We argue that these characteristics will lead prevention-focused consumers to prefer representational as opposed to abstract imagery. Imagery holds symbolic meaning (Scott, 1994) and tends to be processed differently depending on whether it is representational (more analytical) or abstract (more holistic; Uusitalo et al., 2012). Thus, the clarity of representational imagery may symbolically be viewed as a visual artifact or manifestation of the status quo (i.e., given that this type of imagery replicates visual reality). In this regard, a viewer sees an object as it is, without any extraordinary means of the product exceeding or moving beyond its current state. For example, a naturally red or green apple is a safe, comfortable apple, representing what an apple should be in consumers' minds. Unlike an abstract apple, the representational apple poses no risk and offers little, if any, subjective interpretability or symbolism—the imagery is concrete and non-threatening to conventionality.

Further, an abstract, as opposed to a representational image, is likely seen as more creative given its departure from visual reality. Creativity by its very nature diverges from what is known, which includes an element of threat (Baas et al., 2011), and prevention-focused consumers' processing capabilities and preferences are not in alignment with the more creative nature of abstract imagery. Specifically, for prevention-focused consumers, being motivated to maintain the status quo increases their vigilance, which predisposes them to think at a more concrete, local level and leads them to approach stimuli (including imagery) with risk assessment in mind. As such, because of this mindset, prevention-focused consumers tend to be less creative and are less drawn to creative interpretations of objects (Baas et al., 2011; Friedman & Förster, 2001, 2002). Thus, for prevention-focused consumers, abstract imagery may be seen as posing greater levels of inherent risk than representational imagery, leading to more negative downstream consumer responses as

prevention-focused consumers seek to avoid risk deemed unnecessary. By contrast, representational imagery, as a safer, less creative depiction, offers lower risk, which should lead to more positive consumer responses. In summary:

H₁: Representational imagery leads to more positive consumer responses among prevention-focused consumers.

H₂: For prevention-focused consumers, perceived risk mediates the relationship between imagery type and consumer responses, such that representational (vs. abstract) imagery leads to lower perceived risk, which leads to more positive consumer responses.

In contrast, promotion-focused consumers are motivated by their hopes, aspirations, and dreams, and seek opportunities to advance beyond the status quo (i.e., move from their current state of 0 to +1; Higgins, 2000; Idson et al., 2000). In their pursuit to do so, the mindset of promotion-focused consumers contains several key elements which helps them to seek opportunities for advancement. First, they maintain a more global mindset, which allows them to see the bigger picture and potential avenues of divergence (Förster & Higgins, 2005; Lee et al., 2009). Second, promotion-focused consumers tend to judge the external environment as relatively benign, which frees up cognitive reserves to engage in creative thought (Baas et al., 2011; Förster & Dannenberg, 2010; Friedman & Förster, 2001, 2002). When engaging in creative thought, these consumers tend use imagery-based processing and a more abstract thinking style (Roy & Phau, 2014; Zhu & Myers-Levy 2007). Such a processes allows them to find creative avenues to exceed the status quo. Thus, it is not surprising that those with a promotion-focus are more creative and drawn to creative expressions (Baas et al., 2011).

Thus, we argue that these characteristics will lead promotion-focused consumers to prefer abstract as opposed to representational imagery because abstract imagery represents a creative way to exceed the status quo. Specifically, abstract imagery is inherently more creative than representational imagery in that abstraction represents what an object or scenario *could be* as opposed to how the object or scenario *is* (Sternberg, 1999). As prior scholars have demonstrated, abstract imagery is rich in symbolism rather than focused on literal, direct, or functional depiction of objects (Naletelich & Paswan, 2018; Schepman, Rodway, Pullen, 2015; Vessel & Rubin, 2010), and because abstract imagery diverges from reality, promotion-focused consumers are likely to identify such imagery as symbolizing an opportunity to move beyond the status quo. Given this reasoning, we propose the following:

H₃: Abstract imagery leads to more positive consumer responses among promotion-focused consumers.

H₄: For promotion-focused consumers, departure from the status quo mediates the relationship between imagery type and consumer responses, such that abstract (vs. representational) imagery leads to a greater perception of departure from the status quo, which leads to more positive consumer responses.

To be clear, we do not expect construal level or creativity to be direct mediators in the proposed relationships between types of imagery and consumer outcomes because construal level and creativity are inherent to the different mindsets of prevention- and promotion-focused consumers. That is, these facets precede a consumer's encounter with a representational or abstract image, and it is through the lens built from the construal- and creativity-related aspects of the regulatory mindset that a consumer interprets and responds to the given image. Therefore, representational and abstract imagery are expected to align with prevention- and promotion-focused mindsets due to inherent construal- and creativity-related elements within those mindsets, *not* that construal level or creativity are downstream variables *affected by* interactions between regulatory focus and imagery types. Rather, we are proposing that perceived risk and departure from the status quo are the operative mediators as these variables are activated when the type of imagery aligns with the traits of the consumer's regulatory mindset due to how that mindset *interprets the style of imagery*.

3 | OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

Study 1a tests the interaction of primed regulatory focus and imagery type predicted in H₁ and H₃ within a controlled laboratory setting using website manipulations for a fictitious coffee shop (Barista). To increase managerial relevance, Study 1b generalizes the findings using regulatory focus message framing and data collected during a field experiment. Specifically, a social media campaign was run for a fictitious real estate company using Facebook's advertising platform. The study proceeded in two stages: the first stage involved a pretest of the created ads, and the second stage involved a paid advertising campaign testing the effectiveness of the ads on Facebook.

Study 2 seeks to replicate Study 1a in a different context (a fictitious eyeglasses store called Eye See) and tests the dual mediation proposed in H₂ and H₄. Further, the imagery in Study 1a includes manipulations of the interior of the coffee shop and beverages sold, whereas in Study 2, the imagery manipulation involves a piece of artwork hanging on the interior of the retail store. Regulatory focus is induced using two different manipulations across the studies to increase validity and reliability.

Like Study 1b, Study 3 uses message framing but extends the prior studies in several ways. First, an additional outcome variable relevant to the product (making better health decisions) is tested, which in this study was a real brand (Boxed Water). Namely, because the product in Study 3 is healthy (drinking water), the drive to consume more water as a healthy behavior should be a natural consumer outcome. Further, the inclusion of such an outcome seeks to demonstrate the robustness of effects beyond the purchase. Second, the imagery manipulation in Study 3 involves a social media post. Further, a follow-up study (reported in Supporting Information: Web Appendix A) using the same stimuli from Study 2 tests multiple potential alternative explanations that could account for the effects, including creativity and modernity (both associated with abstract art, which could spill over into abstract imagery); saturation and brightness (which tend to shift when representational images are abstracted); affect (given potential differences in preference for abstract imagery, it is possible that depending upon one's regulatory

focus affect could shift) and processing fluency and arousal (given that objects in abstract images may be more difficult to discern, which could reduce processing fluency and increase arousal).

4 | STUDY 1A

4.1 | Participants and procedure

In exchange for course credit, 236 undergraduates participated in a 2 (regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) by 2 (imagery type: representational vs. abstract) between-subjects lab study. Using the focal dependent variable of willingness to pay (WTP), seven outliers (i.e., exceeded three standard deviations) were identified and removed. Additionally, six participants failed an attention check question. The final sample consisted of 223 undergraduates (103 males and 120 females; median age = 18–24) with observations per cell as follows: prevention/representational = 54, prevention/abstract = 56, promotion/representational = 56, and promotion/abstract = 57.

Participants arrived at the lab and were first induced into either a prevention- or promotion-focused mindset. They were then informed that an artisanal handcrafted beverage house, called Barista, was opening nearby and were asked to examine Barista's webpage carefully. Respondents were randomly shown a webpage for Barista that contained either representational or abstract images but did not differ in other contents. After examining the webpage, dependent variables and control measures were then administered. Finally, participants were thanked and left the lab.

4.2 | Independent variables

4.2.1 | Regulatory focus

Consistent with previous research (Cornwell & Higgins, 2016), a prevention (promotion) focus was manipulated by asking participants to write about their duties and obligations (hopes and aspirations).

4.2.2 | Type of imagery

Two websites were created using Wix for the purpose of the study. The websites contained various sections describing Barista, a menu, and either representational or abstract imagery (Figure 1). To create the abstract imagery, the representational photos were abstracted using photo editing software to keep the content and colors as consistent as possible to the representational images to minimize potential confounds.

4.3 | Dependent variables

4.3.1 | WTP

Participants indicated their WTP for a beverage at Barista in dollars and cents.

4.3.2 | Manipulation checks

To ensure the regulatory focus manipulation was successful (Cornwell & Higgins, 2016), participants indicated to what extent they thought about their "duties and obligations/hopes and aspirations" and "responsibilities/accomplishments" as they were writing (interitem correlation = 0.73). To ensure the imagery manipulation was successful, respondents answered four items to indicate whether they thought the images displayed on the webpage were more concrete/abstract, detailed/broad, specific/general, and direct/indirect (Aggarwal & Law, 2005; $\alpha = 0.77$). All manipulation check items were measured along a seven-point semantic differential scale.

4.4 | RESULTS

4.4.1 | Manipulation checks

The regulatory focus manipulation items were averaged, and participants in the prevention-focused condition indicated they thought more about

FIGURE 1 Example of image manipulations on the landing page (representational vs. abstract) in Study 1a

their duties, obligations, and responsibilities ($M = 1.80$, standard deviation [SD] = 1.13), whereas those in the promotion-focused condition reported a significantly stronger leaning toward hopes, dreams, and aspirations ($M = 5.06$, SD = 1.55; F (1, 221) = 320.805; $p < 0.001$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.59$). The items for the imagery manipulation were averaged, and results indicated that the webpage images in the abstract condition were viewed as significantly more abstract than the representational webpage images ($M_{Abstract} = 4.10$; SD = 1.40 vs. $M_{Representational} = 3.12$; SD = 1.11; F (1, 221) = 33.70; $p < 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.13$).

4.4.2 | Main effects and interaction

There was not a main effect for imagery type (F [1, 219] = 0.07; $p = 0.79$) or regulatory focus (F [1, 219] = 0.05; $p = 0.82$) on WTP. However, the interaction of regulatory focus and imagery type on WTP was significant (F [1, 219] = 9.94; $p < 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.04$; Figure 1), with an observed power of 0.88. Those with a prevention focus had significantly greater WTP in the representational imagery condition ($M = \$4.85$; SD = \$1.68) versus the abstract imagery condition ($M = \$4.22$; SD = \$1.70; F (1, 219) = 4.10; $p = 0.04$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$). In contrast, those with a promotion focus had significantly greater WTP in the abstract imagery condition ($M = \$4.95$; SD = \$1.52) versus the representational imagery condition ($M = \$4.21$; SD = \$1.61; F (1, 219) = 5.94; $p = 0.02$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$) Figure 2.

4.5 | Study 1a discussion

Study 1a confirmed the prediction that promotion-focused (prevention-focused) consumers exhibit higher WTP for a product when the associated imagery utilized is abstract (representational), consistent with H_1 and H_3.
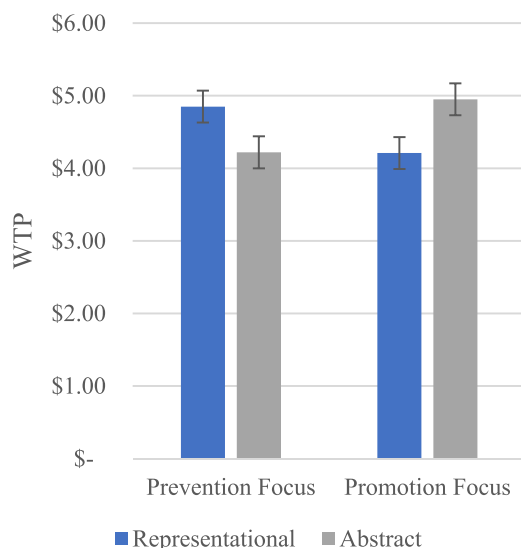

FIGURE 2 Interaction of regulatory focus and webpage imagery on WTP (Study 1a)

5 | STUDY 1B

5.1 | Pretest procedure and results

5.1.1 | Procedure

Four ads were created for the field test (message frame: promotion focus vs. prevention focus by imagery type: representational vs. abstract). The prevention-focused ad included the text, "Looking for a home? Find your safe space," and the ad caption stated, "Avoid risks and find your safe space." In contrast, the promotion-focused ad included the text, "Looking for a home? Find your dream space," and the ad caption stated, "Reach higher and find your dream space." Next, to create the images, a representational image was first selected and then abstracted by applying a filter (Figure 3).

Once the ads were created, they were next pretested to ensure the message framing and imagery manipulations were adequate for the field test. Eighty-eight MTurk panelists were exposed to one of the four ads and were asked to rate the extent to which the ads made them think about promotion- or prevention-focused goals in addition to rating their impressions of the image. Three items measured along a seven-point semantic differential scale captured the message framing manipulation (Avoiding a negative outcome/Achieving a position outcome; Not falling behind/Advancing beyond; Safety and security/Hopes and aspirations; $\alpha = 0.89$), and the same four items used in the prior studies captured the image manipulation (Concrete/Abstract; Detailed/Broad; Specific/General; Direct/Indirect; $\alpha = 0.87$)

5.1.2 | Manipulation checks

The three items measuring message framing were averaged, such that a lower number indicated a stronger prevention-focused frame and a higher number a stronger promotion-focused frame. ANOVA showed a significant difference between the prevention ($M = 3.87$) and promotion ($M = 5.80$) message frames (F [1, 87] = 37.42; $p < 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.29$). The art manipulation was also significant as the abstract imagery in the ad was viewed as being significantly more abstract ($M = 3.98$) than the representational imagery ($M = 2.68$; F (1, 87) = 19.13; $p < 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.16$).

5.2 | Field-test procedure

5.2.1 | Design and participants

A 2 (message frame: promotion focus vs. prevention focus) by 2 (imagery type: representational vs. abstract) field experiment was run using Facebook advertising. The Facebook audience created for the campaign consisted of consumers located in the United States aged 25–65+ with at least one of the following interests: first-time buyer, first-time homebuyer grant, house hunting, just married, property finder, relocation, Trulia, and Zillow. Finally, given that the

FIGURE 3 Image manipulations used in Facebook advertising campaign (representational vs. abstract) in Study 1b

advertisement had a photo of a child, we further narrowed our audience to focus on parents to enhance targeting relevance, in line with how managers make social media advertising decisions. According to Facebook, our created audience had an estimated size of 3,800,000 people.

5.2.2 | Procedure

Using Facebook's advertising platform, a split (A/B) test was created with the objective of increasing traffic using the four different ads previously described. A split test allows for the reliable comparison of different versions of an ad by keeping all factors constant (placement, audience, etc.) aside from those specifically chosen to be manipulated. In this case, we manipulated the creative elements of the ad (imagery type) and the message (message frame). The split test was optimized for number of clicks as we wanted to track the cost per click (CPC) across the four different ads. CPC was chosen as a commonly used metric in the advertising industry to measure ad efficiency and performance (Facebook, 2021; O'Neill, 2010; Wishpond, 2014).

The split test had a total budget of $300 ($75 per advertisement) and was set to run for 10 days. Given that the test was optimized for number of clicks, the budget was only charged when a consumer clicked on the ad (i.e., CPC). The CPC is determined using automatic bidding based upon Facebook's algorithm, which considers ad space at the time of click.

5.3 | Field test results

5.3.1 | Main effects and interaction

Facebook tracks the average CPC for each ad daily. Using the average daily CPC, a univariate GLM with message framing and type of imagery as the independent variables and CPC as the dependent variable revealed a significant interaction ($F_{[1, 35]} = 10.04$; $p < 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.22$; Figure 4), with an observed power of 0.87. Specifically, there was no direct effect of either message framing ($F_{[1, 35]} = 0.06$;
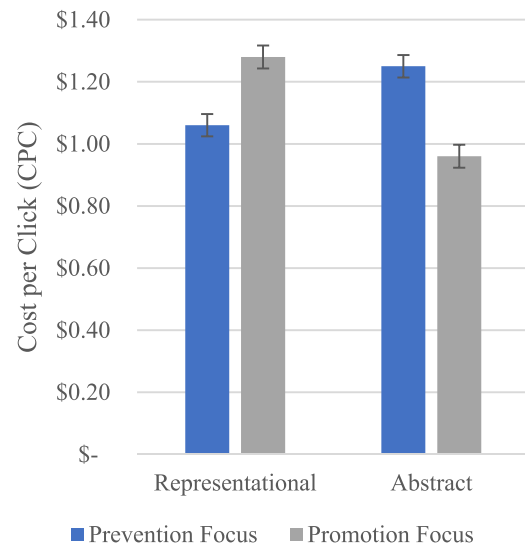

FIGURE 4 Interaction of message frame and ad imagery on cost per click (CPC) in Study 1b

$p = 0.81$) or imagery type ($F_{[1, 35]} = 0.49$; $p = 0.49$) on CPC. However, within the prevention-framed condition, CPC was marginally less (at a confidence interval of 90%) in the representational imagery condition ($M = \$1.06$; $SD = \$0.23$) versus the abstract imagery condition ($M = \$1.25$; $SD = \$0.13$; $F_{[1, 35]} = 2.97$; $p = 0.09$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.08$). In contrast, within the promotion-framed condition, CPC was significantly less in the abstract imagery condition ($M = \$1.00$; $SD = \$0.26$) versus the representational imagery condition ($M = \$1.28$; $SD = \$0.27$; $F_{[1, 35]} = 7.68$; $p = 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.18$).

5.4 | Study 1b discussion

Study 1b increased managerial relevance by testing the interactive effects of prevention- versus promotion-focused message framing and imagery types within a field setting using Facebook's advertising platform. The field study found that an advertisement framed as prevention-focused (promotion-focused) results in a significantly

lower CPC when accompanied by a representational (abstract) image, providing field support for H$_1$ and H$_3$.

6 | STUDY 2

6.1 | Participants and procedure

Three hundred nineteen panelists from Prolific Academic participated in a 2 (regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) by 3 (imagery type: control vs. representational vs. abstract) between-subjects study. As in Study 1a, using the focal dependent variable of WTP, nine outliers (i.e., exceeded three standard deviations) were identified and removed. Additionally, seven participants failed an attention check question. The final sample consisted of 303 participants (141 males, 158 females, and 4 others; median age range = 18–24) with observations per cell as follows: prevention/representational = 53, prevention/abstract = 53, prevention/control = 43, promotion/representational = 50, promotion/abstract = 49, and promotion/control = 55.

Participants were first induced into either a prevention- or promotion-focused mindset. They were then introduced to a retail store called Eye See that specialized in eyeglasses and were instructed to imagine that they were shopping for a new pair of glasses (to increase validity, participants were informed that the glasses could have been either prescription glasses or sunglasses). Respondents were then randomly shown the interior of Eye See either containing a piece of art on the wall (Figure 5) in representational or abstract form or containing no art (i.e., the control condition). After examining the interior of the store, participants then responded to dependent variables and demographic questions.

6.2 | Independent variables

6.2.1 | Regulatory focus

Compared to that of Study 1a, a more robust manipulation of regulatory focus was administered. Following prior research (Lee & Aaker, 2004), a promotion (prevention) focus was manipulated by asking participants to first write about their past hopes, aspirations, and dreams (or duties, obligations, and responsibilities). Next, they were instructed to write about their current hopes, aspirations, and dreams (or duties, obligations, and responsibilities).

FIGURE 5 Art manipulations (control, representational, and abstract) in Study 2

6.2.2 | Type of art

The store interior of Eye See was displayed to all participants. In the imagery present conditions, the art depicted a pair of sunglasses in either representational or abstract form. The control condition displayed a blank wall with no art.

6.3 | Dependent variables

6.3.1 | WTP

Participants indicated their WTP for a pair of glasses at Eye See in dollars and cents.

6.3.2 | Departure from the status quo

Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the following items regarding the visuals in Eye See: "The image makes it easy to lose myself in thoughts of the product," "The image takes me into another world," and "The image helps me get away from my current state" ($\alpha = 0.88$).

6.3.3 | Perceived risk

Participants were asked if shopping at Eye See seemed like a "safe bet/risky bet," "good investment/bad investment," "stable choice/unstable choice," and "safe purchase/risky purchase" ($\alpha = 0.89$). The scale items were inspired by Stone and Grønhaug (1993) and Laroche et al. (2005).

6.3.4 | Manipulation checks

To ensure the regulatory focus manipulation was successful (Lee & Aaker, 2004), participants indicated if they wanted to "do what is right/do what I want," "pay back my loans/take a trip around the world," and "do whatever it takes for me to keep my promises/go wherever my heart takes me" ($\alpha = 0.75$). To ensure the imagery manipulation was successful, the same items as the previous studies were administered to those in the representational and abstract conditions ($\alpha = 0.70$).

6.4 | Results

6.4.1 | Manipulation checks

The manipulation check items for regulatory focus were again averaged. Participants in the prevention-focused condition ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.30$) reported a significantly stronger leaning toward the prevention-focused end of the scale than those in the promotion-focused condition ($M = 4.10$,

$SD = 1.55$; F (1, 301) = 57.286; $p < 0.001$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.16$). The items for the imagery manipulation were averaged and compared for the representational and abstract conditions (two conditions' $n = 205$), and the art on the wall in the abstract condition was viewed as significantly more abstract than the representational art ($M_{Abstract} = 2.72$; $SD_{Abstract} = 1.20$ vs. $M_{Reprentational} = 3.96$; $SD_{Reprentational} = 1.00$; F (1, 203) = 64.22; $p < 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.24$).

6.4.2 | Main effects and interaction

There was not a main effect for imagery type (F [2, 297] = 0.01; $p = 0.99$) or regulatory focus (F [1, 297] = 0.01; $p = 0.91$) on WTP. However, the interaction of regulatory focus and imagery type on WTP was significant (F [2, 297] = 6.59; $p < 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.05$; Figure 6), with an observed power of 0.91.

For those with a prevention focus, there were significant differences among the three conditions (F [2, 297] = 3.10; $p = 0.05$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$), with similar results for those with a promotion focus (F [2, 297] = 3.49; $p = 0.03$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$). Specifically, prevention-focused consumers had significantly greater WTP within the representational ($M = \$121.51$; $SD = \$72.24$) versus the abstract condition ($M = \$88.02$; $SD = 72.41$; $p = 0.02$). Conversely, promotion-focused consumers had significantly greater WTP within the abstract ($M = \$128.84$; $SD = \$73.80$) versus representational condition ($M = \$92.00$; $SD = \$66.41$; $p = 0.01$).

Meanwhile, for prevention-focused consumers, there was a marginally significant difference between the control ($M = \$114.77$; $SD = \$68.65$) versus the abstract condition ($p = 0.07$), while there was not a significant difference between the representational versus control condition ($p = 0.65$). Further, for promotion-focused consumers, there was a significant difference between the abstract versus control condition ($M = \$100.53$; $SD = \$80.63$; $p = 0.05$), but there was not a significant difference between the representational versus control condition ($p = 0.55$).
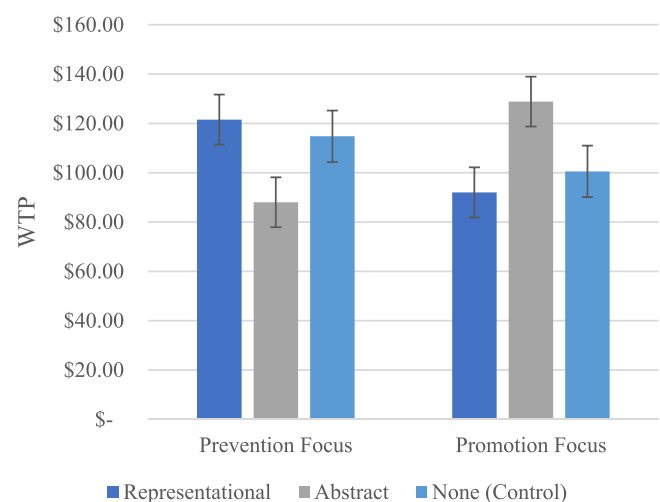

FIGURE 6 Interaction of regulatory focus and art on WTP (Study 2)

6.4.3 | Moderated mediation of risk and departure from the status quo

The control condition was not included in the mediation analysis due to the nonsignificant difference between regulatory focus on WTP within the control condition (F [1, 297]) = 0.93; p = 0.34). The mediation analysis proceeded in two stages. The first stage assessed the interaction of imagery and regulatory focus on risk and departure from the status quo. Multivariate GLM revealed a significant interaction on risk (F [1, 201] = 8.91; $p < 0.01$; η_p^2 = 0.04). Specifically, those with a prevention focus viewed Eye See as being significantly riskier when abstract art (M = 3.68; SD = 1.50) versus representational art (M = 2.85; SD = 1.31; F [1, 201] = 10.16; $p < 0.01$; η_p^2 = 0.05) was present. However, there was not a significant difference between the representational (M = 3.19; SD = 1.35; F [1, 201] = 1.15; p = 0.29) and abstract (M = 2.90; SD = 1.18) conditions for those with a promotion focus.

Further, multivariate GLM revealed a significant interaction on departure from the status quo (F [1, 201 = 4.59; p = 0.03; η_p^2 = 0.02). Those with a promotion focus were able to engage in departure from the status quo significantly more in the presence of abstract art (M = 4.09; SD = 1.49) versus representational art (M = 3.21; SD = 1.45; F [1, 201] = 9.00; $p < 0.01$; η_p^2 = 0.04). However, there was not a significant difference between the representational (M = 3.44; SD = 1.51) and abstract (M = 3.45; SD = 1.39; F [1, 201] < 0.01; p = 0.98) conditions for those with a prevention focus.

In the second stage, PROCESS Model 8 (Hayes, 2017; 90% confidence interval [CI] and 5000 bootstrapped samples) assessed imagery type as the independent variable, regulatory focus as the moderator, risk and departure from the status quo as competing mediators, and WTP as the dependent variable. At a 90% CI, the results confirmed moderated mediation for risk (index = 19.22; SE = 7.90; CI = 7.78–33.67). Namely, the interaction of imagery and regulatory focus predicted risk (effect = −1.12; SE = 0.37; CI = −1.74 to −0.50), and risk significantly predicted WTP (effect = −17.17; SE = 3.57; CI = −23.07 to −11.28). Further, the indirect effect was not significant for those with a promotion focus (effect = 4.96; SE = 4.57; CI = −2.00 to 12.81) but was significant for those with a prevention focus (effect = −14.26; SE = 5.74; CI = −24.54 to −5.85).

The results at a 90% CI also confirmed moderated mediation for departure from the status quo (index = 6.27; SE = 4.67; CI = 0.31–14.95). Namely, the interaction of art and regulatory focus predicted departure from the status quo (effect = 0.88; SE = 0.41; CI = 0.20–1.55), and departure from the status quo significantly predicted WTP (effect = 7.16; SE = 3.27; CI = 1.75–12.57). Additionally, the indirect effect was not significant for those with a prevention focus (effect = 0.05; SE = 2.24; CI = −3.43 to 4.02) but was significant for those with a promotion focus (effect = 6.31; SE = 4.24; CI = 0.79–14.22). Cumulatively, the results confirmed moderated mediation with perceived risk among those with a prevention focus and with departure from the status quo among those with a promotion focus.

6.5 | Discussion

Study 2 confirmed the predictions of H_1 and H_3 and validated the findings of Study 1a in a new context. Further, the results found that perceived risk (departure from the status quo) mediates the relationship between imagery type and WTP for prevention-focused (promotion-focused) consumers, in support of H_2 and H_4.

7 | STUDY 3

7.1 | Participants and procedure

Two hundred forty panelists from Prolific Academic participated in a 2 (regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) by 2 (imagery type: representational vs. abstract) between-subjects study. Using the focal dependent variable of WTP, eight outliers (i.e., exceeded three standard deviations) were identified and removed. Additionally, eight participants failed an attention check question. The final sample consisted of 224 participants (101 males, 122 females, and 1 other; median age = 33) with observations per cell as follows: prevention/representational = 61, prevention/abstract = 57, promotion/representational = 55, and promotion/abstract = 51.

Panelists were first instructed that a non-fictitious company called Boxed Water was seeking input on a social media post and were then exposed to one of four social media posts that included either a prevention or promotion framed message and either a representational or abstract image. After exposure to the social media post, dependent variables and demographic questions were then administered.

7.2 | Independent variables

7.2.1 | Regulatory focus

Drawing inspiration from prior scholars (Higgins, 1997; Kim, 2006), the prevention-framed posts highlighted prevention-focused goals (i.e., not falling behind, protection, and avoiding negative outcomes) and stated, "Failing to drink plenty of water can lead to poor health, less energy, and inferior performance on challenging tasks. Think of all that you can lose by not drinking enough water. Don't fall behind. Get your Boxed Water today!" The promotion-framed message highlighted promotion-focused goals (i.e., advancing beyond, enhancement, and achieving positive outcomes) and stated, "Drinking plenty of water can lead to good health, higher energy, and better performance on challenging tasks. Think of all that you can gain by drinking more water. Advance beyond. Get your Boxed Water today!"

7.2.2 | Type of imagery

To manipulate type of imagery, the social media posts contained either a representational or abstract image (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7 Image manipulations used in social media post (representational vs. abstract) in Study 3

7.3 | Dependent variables

7.3.1 | WTP

Participants indicated their WTP for a carton of water in dollars and cents.

7.3.2 | Better health decisions

Participants responded to three items ($\alpha = 0.93$) to indicate desire to make better health decisions: "In response to the social media post, I want to…[make better health decisions"], ["be more careful with my health"], and ["drink more water"]. Items were measured along a seven-point Likert scale with endpoints strongly disagree to strongly agree.

7.3.3 | Mediators

Departure from the status quo ($\alpha = 0.92$) and perceived risk ($\alpha = 0.93$) were measured using the same items as the prior study.

7.3.4 | Manipulation checks

To ensure the regulatory focus manipulation was successful, participants indicated to what extent the social media post made them think about "Losses from not drinking Boxed Water/Gains from drinking Boxed Water," "How Boxed Water can prevent me from falling behind/How Boxed Water can help me advance," and "Maintaining my current state/Achieving a better state" ($\alpha = 0.77$). To ensure the imagery manipulation was successful, the same items as the previous studies were administered to those in the representational and abstract conditions ($\alpha = 0.77$). All manipulation check items were measured along a seven-point semantic differential scale.

7.4 | Results

7.4.1 | Manipulation checks

Participants in the prevention-focused condition ($M = 3.13$, SD = 0.86) once again indicated a significantly stronger leaning toward the prevention-focused end of the scale average than those in the promotion-focused condition ($M = 5.18$, SD = 0.91; F [1, 222]= 299.717; $p < 0.001$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.57$). The items for the imagery manipulation were averaged, and the abstract image was viewed as significantly more abstract than the representational image ($M_{Representational} = 3.38$, $SD_{Representational} = 1.32$ vs. $M_{Abstract} = 4.18$, $SD_{Abstract} = 1.69$; F [1, 222] = 22.79; $p < 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.09$).

7.4.2 | Main effects and interactions

There was not a main effect for imagery type (F [1, 220] < 0.01; $p = 0.97$) or regulatory framing (F [1, 220] = 0.37; $p = 0.54$) on WTP. Similarly, there was no main effect for imagery type (F [1, 220] < 0.01; $p = 0.99$) or framing (F [1, 220] = 0.42; $p = 0.52$) on desire to make better health decisions. However, the interaction of framing and imagery type on WTP (F [1, 220] = 10.46; $p < 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.05$; observed power = 0.90) and desire to make better health decisions (F [1, 220] = 8.60; $p < 0.01$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.04$; observed power = 0.83; Figure 8) was significant (Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.94$). For the prevention-framed social media post, consumers had significantly greater WTP ($M_{Representational} = \$1.91$; SD = 1.19; vs. $M_{Abstract} = \$1.44$; SD = 1.05; F [1, 220] = 5.64; $p = 0.02$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$) and desire to make better health decisions ($M_{Representational} = 5.25$; SD = 1.22; vs. $M_{Abstract} = 4.78$; SD = 1.26; F [1, 220] = 4.49; $p = 0.04$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$) when the message contained representational imagery. In contrast, for the promotion-framed social media post, consumers had significantly greater WTP ($M_{Abstract} = \$2.00$; SD = 1.15; vs. $M_{Representational} = \$1.53$; SD = 0.92; F [1, 220] = 4.86; $p = 0.03$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$) and desire to make better health decisions ($M_{Abstract} = 5.36$; SD = 0.92; vs. $M_{Representational} = 4.88$;
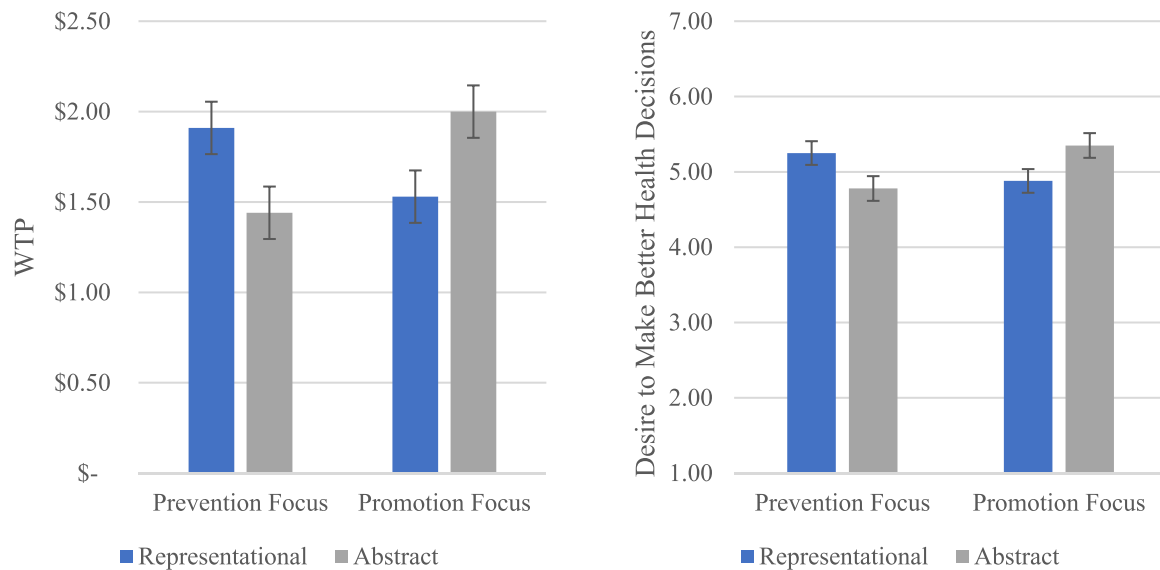
FIGURE 8 Interaction of message framing (prevention vs. promotion focus) and imagery on WTP and intentions to make better health decisions (Study 3)

SD = 1.33; F [1, 220] = 4.13; p = 0.04; η_p^2 = 0.02) when the message contained abstract imagery.

7.4.3 | Moderated mediation of risk and departure from the status quo for WTP and desire to make better health decisions

The mediation analysis proceeded in three stages. The first stage assessed the interaction of imagery and message framing on risk and departure from the status quo. Multivariate GLM revealed a significant interaction on risk (F [1, 220] = 4.23; p = 0.04; η_p^2 = 0.02). Specifically, the prevention-framed message was viewed as being significantly riskier when the post contained abstract imagery (M = 3.08; SD = 1.39) versus representational imagery (M = 3.94; SD = 1.64; F [1, 220] = 10.70; p < 0.01; η_p^2 = 0.05) was present. However, there was not a significant difference between the representational (M = 3.07; SD = 1.34; F [1, 220] = 0.07; p = 0.79) and abstract (M = 3.14; SD = 1.30) conditions for the promotion-framed message.

Similarly, multivariate GLM revealed a significant interaction on departure from the status quo (F [1, 220] = 4.30; p = 0.04; η_p^2 = 0.02). Specifically, those who viewed the promotion-focused message were able to engage in departure from the status quo significantly more when the post contained abstract imagery (M = 3.41; SD = 1.61) versus representational imagery (M = 2.72; SD = 1.53; F [1, 220] = 5.18; p = 0.02; η_p^2 = 0.02). However, there was not a significant difference between the representational (M = 2.99; SD = 1.61) and abstract (M = 2.82; SD = 1.48; F [1, 220] = 0.37; p = 0.54) conditions for the prevention-framed message.

In the second stage, PROCESS Model 8 (Hayes, 2017; 95% CI and 5000 bootstrapped samples) assessed imagery type as the independent variable, message framing as the moderator, risk and departure from the

status quo as competing mediators, and WTP as the dependent variable. The results confirmed moderated mediation for risk (index = 0.18; SE = 0.09; CI = 0.01–0.38). Namely, the interaction of imagery and message framing predicted risk (effect = −0.79; SE = 0.38; CI = −1.54 to −0.03), and risk significantly predicted WTP (effect = −0.22; SE = 0.04; CI = −0.31 to −0.14). Further, the indirect effect was not significant for the promotion-framed message (effect = −0.02; SE = 0.06; CI = −0.13 to 0.10) but was significant for the prevention-framed message (effect = −0.19; SE = 0.08; CI = −0.36 to −0.06).

Likewise, the results also confirmed moderated mediation for departure from the status quo (index = 0.27; SE = 0.14; CI = 0.02–0.56). Namely, the interaction of imagery and message framing predicted departure from the status quo (effect = 0.87; SE = 0.42; CI = 0.04–1.69), and departure from the status quo significantly predicted WTP (effect = 0.31; SE = 0.04; CI = 0.23–0.39). Additionally, the indirect effect was not significant for the prevention-framed message (effect = −0.05; SE = 0.09; CI = −0.24 to 0.11) but was significant for the promotion-framed message (effect = 0.21; SE = 0.10; CI = 0.03–0.43).

In the third stage, the same model assessed desire to make better health decisions as the outcome, with all other variables held in place. The results confirmed moderated mediation for risk (index = 0.15; SE = 0.10; CI = 0.01–0.38). The interaction on risk was the same as that in the paragraph above, and risk significantly predicted desire to make better health decisions (effect = −0.19; SE = 0.05; CI = −0.30 to −0.09). Further, the indirect effect was not significant for the promotion-framed message (effect = −0.01; SE = 0.05; CI = −0.12 to 0.09) but was significant for the prevention-framed message (effect = −0.17; SE = 0.08; CI = −0.36 to −0.04).

Similarly, the results confirmed moderated mediation for departure from the status quo (index = 0.21; SE = 0.12; CI = 0.01–0.46). The interaction on departure from the status quo was the same as that in the paragraph above, and departure from the status quo

significantly predicted desire to make better health decisions (effect = 0.25; SE = 0.05; CI = 0.15–0.34). Additionally, the indirect effect was not significant for the prevention-framed message (effect = −0.04; SE = 0.07; CI = −0.19 to 0.09) but was significant for the promotion-framed message (effect = 0.17; SE = 0.08; CI = 0.02–0.36). Cumulatively, the results confirmed moderated mediation with risk for the prevention-framed message and with departure from the status quo for the promotion-framed message.

7.4.4 | Alternative explanations

The listed alternative explanations in the overview of studies (creativity, modernity, saturation, brightness, processing fluency, affect, and arousal) were measured and tested in a follow-up study using the same stimuli from Study 2. The results of that follow-up study indicated that none of the alternative explanations adequately account for the effects of regulatory focus and imagery type on the outcomes. Please refer to Supporting Information: Web Appendix A for more details on this analysis.

7.5 | Discussion

Study 3 replicated the findings of prior studies with a real brand and an additional outcome (desire to make better health decisions), supporting H_{1-4}, and ruled out creativity, modernity, saturation, brightness, processing fluency, affect, and arousal as alternative explanations in a follow-up study using the same stimuli from the main study.

8 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

The four studies above validate the prediction that prevention-focused consumers respond better to representational imagery and promotion-focused consumers to abstract imagery, including higher purchase intentions, WTP, and willingness to make better health decisions. We also find in Study 3 (the Facebook field study) that organizations can be more efficient with their posts (i.e., lower CPC) by aligning regulatory frames with their congruent types of imagery. Further, we find that perceived risk (i.e., abstract imagery is perceived as riskier than representational) mediates the results for prevention-focused consumers, whereas departure from the status quo (i.e., abstract imagery represents greater movement beyond the status quo) mediates the results for promotion-focused consumers. Several implications follow.

8.1 | Theoretical implications

First, ours is the first work to our knowledge to document regulatory fit effects with types of imagery—namely, representational versus abstract imagery. As such, our work builds upon prior scholarship (Avnet & Higgins, 2006; Cesario et al., 2008; Higgins &

Cornwell, 2016; Wang & Lee, 2006) to advance the literature on regulatory fit effects beyond semantic information into an untapped domain of the visual realm (types of imagery). Given that interpretations of imagery are important to consumer responses, we thus contribute to expanding knowledge of how regulatory mindsets can affect how consumers respond to representational and abstract imagery. While our findings are important in isolation, our results also represent a starting point for exploring methods of manipulating visual imagery and other non-verbal cues to achieve fit with mindsets such as those stemming from regulatory focus. As such, we answer the call to explore new methods of attaining regulatory fit beyond message framing (Cesario et al., 2008).

Second, and similarly, to the best of our knowledge, we are the first to demonstrate a connection between regulatory focus and types of imagery. This connection builds on how regulatory mindsets can influence consumer processing by a) testing specific types of imagery that have important influences on consumer responses and b) demonstrating that those mindsets influence not only upstream processing but also downstream interpretations of visual imagery. As such, our work extends that of Roy and Phau (2014), who examined how information presented either analytically or visually aligns with regulatory focus, and Zhu and Meyers-Levy (2007), who found that prevention-focused consumers engage in item-specific elaboration and promotion-focused consumers in relational elaboration. While those works focused on styles of information processing, our work deals with how regulatory mindsets can alter the lens of interpretation that consumers apply to representational and abstract imagery, which subsequently affects their responses to imagery in markedly different ways.

Third, the present work also responds to the call by Bulmer and Buchanan-Oliver (2006) to investigate how the visual rhetoric of forms of imagery can be uniquely appropriated to influence and persuade distinct groups or segments of consumer audiences. In that vein, our work ties regulatory focus to visual imagery as a form of communication. More specifically, we show that representational and abstract imagery are linked to consumer motivation, which has important consequences for the use of imagery types in products, packaging, signage, and other visual elements. Importantly, the relationship between motivation and these types of imagery are not restricted to regulatory focus, nor are they relegated to the tested contexts above. Rather, other domains of motivation should also importantly align with representational versus abstract imagery, as these types of imagery can boost consumer perceptions of goal achievement (or loss avoidance).

Fourth, we extend the link between regulatory focus and types of imagery beyond initial relationships with construal level (Förster & Higgins, 2005; Lee et al., 2009) and creativity (Baas et al., 2011; Friedman & Förster, 2001) to demonstrate why prevention and promotion-focus consumers respond more favorably to one type of imagery over the other. Specifically, prevention-focused consumers favor representational (vs. abstract) imagery because these consumers think more locally and vigilantly. Thus, this vigilance leads those with a prevention focus to view abstract imagery as riskier. In contrast, promotion-focused consumers favor abstract (vs. representational) imagery as abstraction can represent greater movement

beyond the status quo, given promotion-focused consumers' more global and eager mindsets.

Finally, we show that types of imagery can be a mechanism of persuasion. Thus, beyond more conventional methods of persuasion, like product quality, uniqueness relative to competitive products, or pricing, imagery types can draw consumers toward a product and increase relevant responses toward that product (i.e., purchase intentions or WTP). Importantly, such responses also include the pursuit of health goals, as evidenced in Study 3. Our findings are insightful for theory as prior scholarship has primarily examined the persuasiveness of representational imagery or various color effects of representational imagery only (i.e., Lee et al., 2014, 2016), leaving abstract imagery largely ignored.

8.2 | Managerial and consumer implications

Marketing managers should find the results of the present study applicable to marketing messages for an array of products across various online platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and websites, as well as for signage, packaging, and other elements of brick-and-mortar stores. Generally, managers should consider whether their products/services/stores are more aligned with a promotion or a prevention focus (either through message framing or through target markets) and then select representational or abstract images that support that focus. Market segmentation strategies can identify demographic groups that are more likely to be prevention- or promotion-focused. For example, younger consumers (i.e., the Millennial and Gen Z generations) are more promotion-focused and thus may respond more positively to abstract images (i.e., augmented reality lenses), whereas consumers of older generations (i.e., the War Baby Generation and Baby Boomers) might form more positive responses to representational imagery. In relation to the younger generations, organizations could provide abstract elements by altering images via traditional marketing communications or creating augmented reality lenses for use on social media platforms such as SnapChat or TikTok (Hall, 2017; Sallomi, 2018; Talbot, 2019). The latter may be of particular interest, given Gen Z's high importance on creative digital expression (JWT Intelligence and Snap, 2019).

Importantly, while the above studies tested a variety of products to establish external generalizability, managers should be able to apply the resultant insights to product contexts that were not directly observed in this study yet involve the potential for regulatory message framing. For example, financial products and securities often involve a high degree of risk (potentially triggering a prevention focus more commonly than a promotion focus), so consumers seeing imagery for those products would likely be more responsive to marketing messages that display representational images, especially if those images are positive. Similarly, marketing messages for medical products, such as prescription or over-the-counter drugs, devices, and procedures, are often framed to help consumers avoid adverse health risks, which may lead to better responses with neutral or positive representational imagery. Conversely, health supplements,

weight loss products, and exercise equipment are implements that help with achieving personal dreams and aspirations of a healthier or slimmer/toned body. As such, neutral abstract imagery may be better for those kinds of products. Similarly, environmentally friendly products and biodegradable containers/materials move beyond the status quo to the aspirational fulfillment of wishes for an extraordinary natural environment and thus may realize benefits from the use of neutral abstract imagery.

Managers should also consider the personalities of their brands and adopt imagery strategies accordingly. For example, brands may be classified as leaning toward either a prevention or a promotion focus (Kim & Sung, 2013), which may indicate that representational or abstract imagery should be used more often in brand communications. The use of such tactics should prove helpful as more than 50% of Americans report feeling lonely (Cigna, 2018), and brand communities can help fill the void (Karpis, 2018). However, research (i.e., Zhou et al., 2012) shows such communities are effective when the community traits (i.e., promotion- vs. prevention-focused consumers) match the brand traits (i.e., regulatory focus brand personality and imagery used within the community by the brand). Of course, brand managers should also consider the given product and objectives of communication (i.e., positioning relative to the status quo or the given message frame to be adopted) when utilizing imagery in specific situations.

The above findings also provide valuable insights for social marketing and public policy. Namely, while most of our studies focused on financial outcomes for brands (i.e., WTP), we also demonstrate that matching imagery type with the appropriate regulatory frame can enhance social initiatives—in this case, making better health decisions and donating to charity. This finding should prove important when designing social marketing campaigns by ensuring that promotion-focused (prevention-focused) messages or consumers likely to be in a promotion-focused (prevention-focused) mindset are matched with abstract (representational) imagery. This may also help ongoing campaigns. For example, the FDA recently developed an antismoking campaign that features an animated character called "My Little Lungs" (Jardine, 2017). The campaign is more abstract and relies upon prevention-framed messages to warn teens about the dangers of smoking. Given our findings above, it may be of use to explore if such campaigns would prove more successful if the message frames and types of imagery are matched.

Finally, when imagery includes positive (i.e., a whole, healthy-looking heart) or negative (i.e., a broken or damaged heart) elements, managers should ensure regulatory focus is matched with the correct imagery type to enhance outcomes. For example, if an organization is promoting health insurance, and the message is targeted toward those with a prevention focus or has a prevention-focused frame (i.e., avoiding health risks), imagery selected for the ad should be positive (i.e., an individual happily playing) regardless of imagery type (i.e., representational or abstract). In contrast, if the message is targeted toward promotion-focused consumers or includes a promotion-focused message frame (i.e., achieving health goals), managers should either use abstract, negatively valanced imagery (i.e., an individual

with a sad expression wearing a cast) or representational, positively valanced imagery (i.e., an individual with a happy expression and no indicators of broken bones).

8.3 | Limitations and future research directions

While the above studies offer important insights, we acknowledge the following limitations. First, while some studies were conducted in a laboratory or online field setting, almost all studies were based on hypothetical scenarios and relied on self-report measures. Thus, future research should test the effects in a brick-and-mortar field setting, which can be achieved through in-store signage as well as individual product packaging, and utilize actual behaviors as dependent variables. Second, to the best of our knowledge, we are the first to operationalize departure from the status quo. While the items that make up the scale were developed based on the definition of status quo, future research should further validate the scale items and test across various contexts. Third, all manipulations were of static imagery; future research could investigate whether the effects hold for dynamic imagery (i.e., commercials). Fourth, and relatedly, while several studies did include imagery of a focal product, future research should explore product-related imagery to a greater extent to identify possible moderators (i.e., do the effects change by product type?).

Fifth, we used a filter to abstract images, which is likely to appeal to practitioners as filters are a less expensive yet still viable means of creating abstract images (i.e., hiring artists or designers could become quite expensive and not be any more advantageous to the firm). This approach also ensured that the manipulations were more directly comparable in their design and contents outside of their level of abstraction. However, future research could explore other forms of abstract images, which may be less subtle than the manipulations used in our study. Sixth, in all studies but one (Study 2), the imagery was the focal point. Future research should test representational and abstract imagery in a context in which the imagery is not the primary aspect for evaluation to determine whether the findings are consistent. Seventh, though we show that the effects hold when regulatory focus is induced through message framing, additional replications across various contexts could show greater reliability in message framing as a strategy for achieving fit with representational versus abstract imagery, which would expand the contribution to verbal and nonverbal combined means of achieving regulatory fit. Eighth, in the process of abstracting the representational images, there were slight differences in color balance. While we have ruled out saturation and brightness as alternative explanations, we note these differences as potential limitations. Finally, we acknowledge that our samples were from a Western country; future research should determine whether the results are consistent in other countries/cultures, especially given cross-cultural differences in regulatory focus.

Beyond addressing the above limitations, future research could also use the findings of the present study to respond to the call by Kim et al. (2018) to identify contexts that activate either status maintenance or status advancement for more luxury-themed products. For example, it may be that message framing with a prevention (promotion) focus, and

representational (abstract) images are influential in igniting either status maintenance or status advancement. An interesting line of inquiry in this vein would be to examine how different individual variables, such as religiosity, may serve as moderating constructs in these relationships. Perhaps the strength of religiosity, due to a core belief in humility and/or avoidance of showiness or excess, suppresses the relationship between promotion focus and abstract images in favor of status maintenance rather than status advancement. Likewise, it may be that the economic environment plays a pivotal role, such that consumers facing potential layoffs or downsizing may opt for status maintenance, regardless of message framing or the displayed image.

Future research should also investigate the role of regulatory focus framing and representational/abstract images on engagement with hedonic content by sponsored influencer marketing messages (Hughes et al., 2019). It is possible that hedonic content suppresses the relationship between a prevention focus and representational images on downstream responses by reducing engagement. Research should also investigate intervening individual difference variables in this relationship (i.e., age, imagery preferences, gender).

8.4 | Conclusion

Visual imagery is one of the most important methods of communicating with consumers (Burns et al., 1993; Rossiter & Percy, 1980) and has received considerable attention both within industry and academia (i.e., Lee et al., 2014; Uusitalo et al., 2012), but representational versus abstract imagery remain underexamined. Given the growing use of these different forms of imagery by consumers and practitioners (Ferrell, 2019; Gibson, 2019; Griner, 2019a, 2019b; Hall, 2017; Joy et al., 2014; Naiman, 2018; Silbert, 2019; Webby Awards, 2019) and the role of regulatory focus in consumer-related information processing (Higgins, 1997; Kareklas et al., 2012; Kim & Sung, 2013; Lee & Aaker, 2004), our work adds to the growing literature on visual imagery in marketing. We hope that our findings lead to further inquiry into how representational and abstract imagery affect consumer perceptions and behavior, which would offer value to both theory and practice alike.

ORCID

Kelly Naletelich 🔟 http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6899-5708
Nancy Spears 🔟 http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8371-4962

REFERENCES

Aggarwal, P., & Law, S. (2005). Role of relationship norms in processing brand information. *Journal of Consumer Research, 32*(3), 453–464.

Avnet, T., & Higgins, E. T. (2006). How regulatory fit affects value in consumer choices and opinions. *Journal of Marketing Research, 43*(1), 1–10.

Baas, M., De Dreu, C. K. W., & Nijstad, B. A. (2011). When Prevention promotes creativity: The role of mood, regulatory focus, and regulatory closure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*(5), 794–809.

Baek, T. H., & Yoon, S. (2020). Death imagery in antipoaching advertising. *Psychology & Marketing*, 37(12), 1684–1695.

Bubić, A., Sušac, A., & Palmović, M. (2016). Observing individuals viewing art: The effects of titles on viewers' eye-movement profiles. *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, 35(2), 194–213.

Bulmer, S., & Buchanan-Oliver, M. (2006). Visual rhetoric and global advertising imagery. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 12(1), 49–61.

Burns, A. C., Biswas, A., & Babin, L. A. (1993). The operation of visual imagery as a mediator of advertising effects. *Journal of Advertising*, 22(2), 71–85.

Cesario, J., Higgins, E. T., & Scholer, A. A. (2008). Regulatory fit and persuasion: Basic principles and remaining questions. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2(1), 444–463.

Chamorro-Premuzic, T., Reimers, S., Hsu, A., & Ahmetoglu, G. (2009). Who art thou? Personality predictors of artistic preferences in a large UK sample: The Importance of openness. *British Journal of Psychology*, 100(3), 501–516.

Cigna. (2018). Cigna U.S. Loneliness Index. Survey of 20,000 Americans examining behaviors driving loneliness in the United States. Retrieved from https://www.cigna.com/static/www-cigna-com/docs/about-us/newsroom/studies-and-reports/combatting-loneliness/loneliness-survey-2018-full-report.pdf

Cornwell, J. F. M., & Higgins, E. T. (2016). Eager feelings and vigilant reasons: Regulatory focus differences in judging moral wrongs. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 145(3), 338–355.

Crowe, E., & Higgins, E. T. (1997). Regulatory focus and strategic inclinations: Promotion and prevention in decision-making. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 69(2), 117–132.

Facebook for Business (2021). CPC (cost per link click). Last accessed October 21, 2021 from https://www.facebook.com/business/help/683065845109838

Fazeli, Z., Shukla, P., & Perks, K. (2020). Digital buying behavior: The role of regulatory fit and self-construal in online luxury goods purchase intentions. *Psychology & Marketing*, 37(1), 15–26.

Feist, G. J., & Brady, T. R. (2004). Openness to experience, non-conformity, and the preference for abstract art. *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, 22(1), 77–89.

Ferrell, G. (2019). Louis Vuitton finds another art MVP, unveiling a jaw-dropping pop-up shop and new collaboration. *PaperCity Magazine*. https://www.papercitymag.com/fashion/louis-vuitton-artist-jonas-wood-collaboration-scarf/

Florack, A., & Scarabis, M. (2006). How advertising claims affect brand preferences and category–brand associations: The role of regulatory fit. *Psychology & Marketing*, 23(9), 741–755.

Förster, J., & Dannenberg, L. (2010). GLOMOsys: A systems account of global versus local processing. *Psychological inquiry*, 21(3), 175–197.

Förster, J., & Higgins, E. T. (2005). How global versus local perception fits regulatory focus. *Psychological Science*, 16(8), 631–636.

Friedman, R. S., & Förster, J. (2001). The effects of promotion and prevention cues on creativity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(6), 1001–1013.

Friedman, R. S., & Förster, J. (2002). The influence of approach and avoidance motor actions on creative cognition. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 38(1), 41–55.

Furnham, A., & Avison, M. (1997). Personality and preference for surreal paintings. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 23(6), 923–935.

Furnham, A., & Bunyan, M. (1988). Personality and art preferences. *European Journal of Personality*, 2, 67–74.

Furnham, A., & Walker, J. (2001). Personality and judgements of abstract, pop art, and representational paintings. *European Journal of Personality*, 15(1), 57–72.

Gibson, D. (2019). BBC Creative wins 19 awards at the drum roses 2019. *The Drum*. https://www.thedrum.com/news/2019/05/15/bbc-creative-wins-19-awards-the-drum-roses-2019

Griner, D. (2019a). These McDonald's egg mcmuffin videos might be the most satisfying ads ever made. *Adweek*. https://www.adweek.com/creativity/these-mcdonalds-egg-mcmuffin-videos-might-be-the-most-satisfying-ads-ever-made/

Griner, D. (2019b). McDonald's France created lovely, impressionistic ads about days that call for delivery. *Adweek*. https://www.adweek.com/agencies/mcdonalds-france-created-lovely-impressionistic-ads-about-days-that-call-for-delivery/

Hagtvedt, H., & Patrick, V. M. (2008). Art infusion: The influence of visual art on the perception and evaluation of consumer products. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 45(3), 379–389.

Hall, J. (2017). How augmented reality is changing the world of consumer marketing. *Forbes Magazine*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2017/11/08/how-augmented-reality-is-changing-the-world-of-consumer-marketing/#164539e354cf

Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.

Heinrichs, R. W., & Cupchik, G. C. (1985). Individual differences as predictors of preference in visual art. *Journal of Personality*, 53(3), 502–515.

Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychologist*, 52(12), 1280–1300.

Higgins, E. T. (1998). Promotion and prevention: Regulatory focus as a Motivational Principle, *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 30, pp. 1–46). Academic Press.

Higgins, E. T. (2000). Making a good decision: Value from Fit. *American Psychologist*, 55(11), 1217–1230.

Higgins, E. T., & Cornwell, J. F. M. (2016). Securing foundations and advancing frontiers: Prevention and promotion effects on judgment & decision making. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 136, 56–67.

Hughes, C., Swaminathan, V., & Brooks, G. (2019). Driving brand engagement through online social influencers: An empirical investigation of sponsored blogging campaigns. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(5), 78–96.

Idson, L. C., Liberman, N., & Higgins, E. T. (2000). Distinguishing gains from nonlosses and losses from nongains: A regulatory focus perspective on hedonic intensity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 36(3), 252–274.

Jardine, A. (2017). The FDA Targets Teen Smokers with Animations Featuring Unfortunate 'Little Lungs'. *AdAge*. https://adage.com/creativity/work/little-lungs-pool/51220

Joy, A., Wang, J. J., Chan, T. S., Sherry, J. F., Jr., & Cui, G. (2014). M(Art) worlds: Consumer perceptions of how luxury brand stores become art institutions. *Journal of Retailing*, 90(3), 347–364.

JWT Intelligence & Snap. (2019). "Into Z Future,". https://assets.ctfassets.net/inb32lme5009/5DFlqKVGldmAu7X6btfGQt/44fdca09d7b630ee28f5951d54feed71/Into_Z_Future_Understanding_Gen_Z_The_Next_Generation_of_Super_Creatives_.pdf

Kareklas, I., Carlson, J. R., & Muehling, D. D. (2012). The role of regulatory focus and self-view in 'Green' advertising message framing. *Journal of Advertising*, 41(4), 25–39.

Karpis, P. (2018). Why building community is critical to your brand's success. *Forbes Magazine*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulinaguditch/2018/11/29/why-building-community-is-critical-to-your-brands-success/#5695871e3458

Ketron, S., Naletelich, K., & Migliorati, S. (2021). Representational versus abstract imagery: Effects on purchase intentions between vice and virtue foods. *Journal of Business Research*, 125, 52–62.

Kim, Y-J. (2006). The role of regulatory focus in message framing in antismoking advertisements for adolescents. *Journal of Advertising*, 35(1), 143–151.

Kim, D. H., & Sung, Y. (2013). Gucci versus old navy: Interplay of brand personality and regulatory focus in advertising persuasion. *Psychology & Marketing*, 30(12), 1076–1087.

Lee, A. Y., Keller, P. A., & Sternthal, B. (2009). Value from regulatory construal fit: The persuasive impact of fit between consumer goals and message concreteness. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *36*(5), 735–747.

Kim, J. C., Park, B., & Dubois, D. (2018). How consumers' political ideology and status-maintenance goals interact to shape their desire for luxury goods. *Journal of Marketing*, *82*(6), 132–149.

Knapp, R. H., & Wulff, A. (1963). Preferences for abstract and representational art. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *60*(2), 255–262.

Laroche, M., Yang, Z., McDougall, G. H. G., & Bergeron, J. (2005). Internet versus bricks-and-mortar retailers: An investigation into intangibility and its consequences. *Journal of Retailing*, *81*(4), 251–267.

Lee, A. Y., & Aaker, J. L. (2004). Bringing the frame into focus: The influence of regulatory fit on processing fluency and persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *86*(2), 205–218.

Lee, H., Fujita, K., Deng, X., & Unnava, H. R. (2016). The role of temporal distance on the color of future-directed imagery: A construal-level perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *43*(5), 707–725.

Lee, H., Deng, X., Unnava, H. R., & Fujita, K. (2014). Monochrome forests and colorful trees: The effect of black-and-white versus color imagery on construal level. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *41*(4), 1015–1032.

Lyssenko, N., Redies, C., & Hayn-Leichsenring, G. U. (2016). Evaluating abstract art: Relation between term usage, subjective ratings, image properties and personality traits. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *7*, 973.

Motyka, S., Grewal, D., Puccinelli, N. M., Roggeveen, A. L., Avnet, T., Daryanto, A., de Ruyter, K., & Wetzels, M. (2014). Regulatory fit: A meta-analytic synthesis. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *24*(3), 394–410.

Nadal, M., Schiavi, S., & Cattaneo, Z. (2018). Hemispheric asymmetry of liking for representational and abstract paintings. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, *25*(5), 1934–1942.

Naiman, L. (2018). Luxury retailers Like Louis Vuitton are blurring the lines between art and commerce, and for good reason. *Inc.com*. https:// www.inc.com/linda-naiman/can-contemporary-art-create-value-for-your-brand.html

Naletelich, K., & Paswan, A. K. (2018). Art infusion in retailing: The effect of art genres. *Journal of Business Research*, *85*, 514–522.

Nanda, U., Bajema, R., Ortega-Andeane, P., Solovyova, I., & Bozovic-Stamenovic, R. (2013). Investigating the impact of culture and education on students' art preferences. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, *30*(4), 291–310.

O'Neill, N. (2010). CPM vs CPC: Which should you use for Facebook ads? Last accessed October 21, 2021, from https://www.adweek.com/digital/cpm-vs-cps

Pietras, K., & Czernecka, K. (2018). Art training and personality traits as predictors of aesthetic experience of different art styles among Polish students. *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, *49*(4), 466–474.

Rossiter, J. R., & Percy, L. (1980). Attitude change through visual imagery in advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, *9*(2), 10–16.

Roy, R., & Phau, I. (2014). Examining regulatory focus in the information processing of imagery and analytical advertisements. *Journal of Advertising*, *43*(4), 371–381.

Sallomi, P. (2018). Augmented reality takes another step forward. *The Wall Street Journal, Deloitte*. https://deloitte.wsj.com/cio/2018/03/23/augmented-reality-takes-another-step-forward/

Schepman, A., Rodway, P., & Pullen, S. J. (2015). Greater cross-viewer similarity of semantic associations for representational than for abstract artworks. *Journal of vision*, *15*(14):12.

Scott, L. M. (1994). Images in advertising: The need for a theory of visual rhetoric. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *21*, 252–273.

Sidhu, D. M., McDougall, K. H., Jalava, S. T., & Bodner, G. E. (2018). Prediction of beauty and liking ratings for abstract and representational paintings using subjective and objective measures. *PLoS One*, *13*(7), e0200431.

Silbert, J. (2019). Louis Vuitton extends 'Louis Vuitton X' retrospective (update). *hypebeasT*. https://hypebeast.com/2019/9/louis-vuitton-x-exhibition-recap-inside-look-archives

Sternberg, R., (Ed.). (1999). *Handbook of creativity*. Cambridge University Press.

Stokstad, M., & Cothren, M. (2014). *Art history*. Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Stone, R. N., & Grønhaug, K. (1993). Perceived risk: Further considerations for the marketing discipline. *European Journal of Marketing*, *27*(3), 39–50.

Talbot, K. (2019). How snapchat is transforming the physical world through augmented reality. *Forbes Magazine*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/katetalbot/2019/05/01/how-snapchat-is-transforming-the-physical-world-through-augmented-reality/#17a7137d4e4c

Uusitalo, L., Simola, J., & Kuisma, J. (2012). Consumer perception of abstract and representational visual art. *International Journal of Arts Management*, *15*(1), 30–41.

Vessel, E. A. & Rubin, N. (2010). Beauty and the beholder: Highly individual taste for abstract, but not real-world images. *Journal of vision*, *10*(2), 1–14.

Wang, J., & Lee, A. Y. (2006). The role of regulatory focus in preference construction. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *43*(1), 28–38.

Webby Awards. (2019). "World Cup—History Will Be Made," The Webby Awards. https://www.webbyawards.com/winners/2019/advertising-media-pr/individual/branded-content/world-cup-history-will-be-made/

Wiersema, D. V., van der Schalk, J., & van Kleef, G. A. (2012). Who's afraid of red, yellow, and blue? Need for cognitive closure predicts aesthetic preferences. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, *6*(2), 168–174.

Wishpond (2014). How to A/B split test your Facebook ads to maximize ROI. Last accessed October 21, 2021, from https://blog.wishpond.com/post/64393992717/how-to-a-b-split-test-your-facebook-ads-to-maximize-roi

Zemack-Rugar, Y., & Klucarova-Travani, S. (2018). Should donation ads include happy victim images? The moderating role of regulatory focus. *Marketing Letters*, *29*(4), 421–434.

Zhang, J., & Yang, X. (2015). Stylistic properties and regulatory fit: Examining the role of self-regulatory focus in the effectiveness of an actor's vs. observer's visual perspective. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *25*(3), 449–458.

Zhou, Z., Zhang, Q., Su, C., & Zhou, N. (2012). How do brand communities generate brand relationships? Intermediate mechanisms. *Journal of Business Research*, *65*(7), 890–895.

Zhu, R., & Meyers-Levy, J. (2007). Exploring the cognitive mechanism that underlies regulatory focus effects. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *34*(1), 89–96.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.