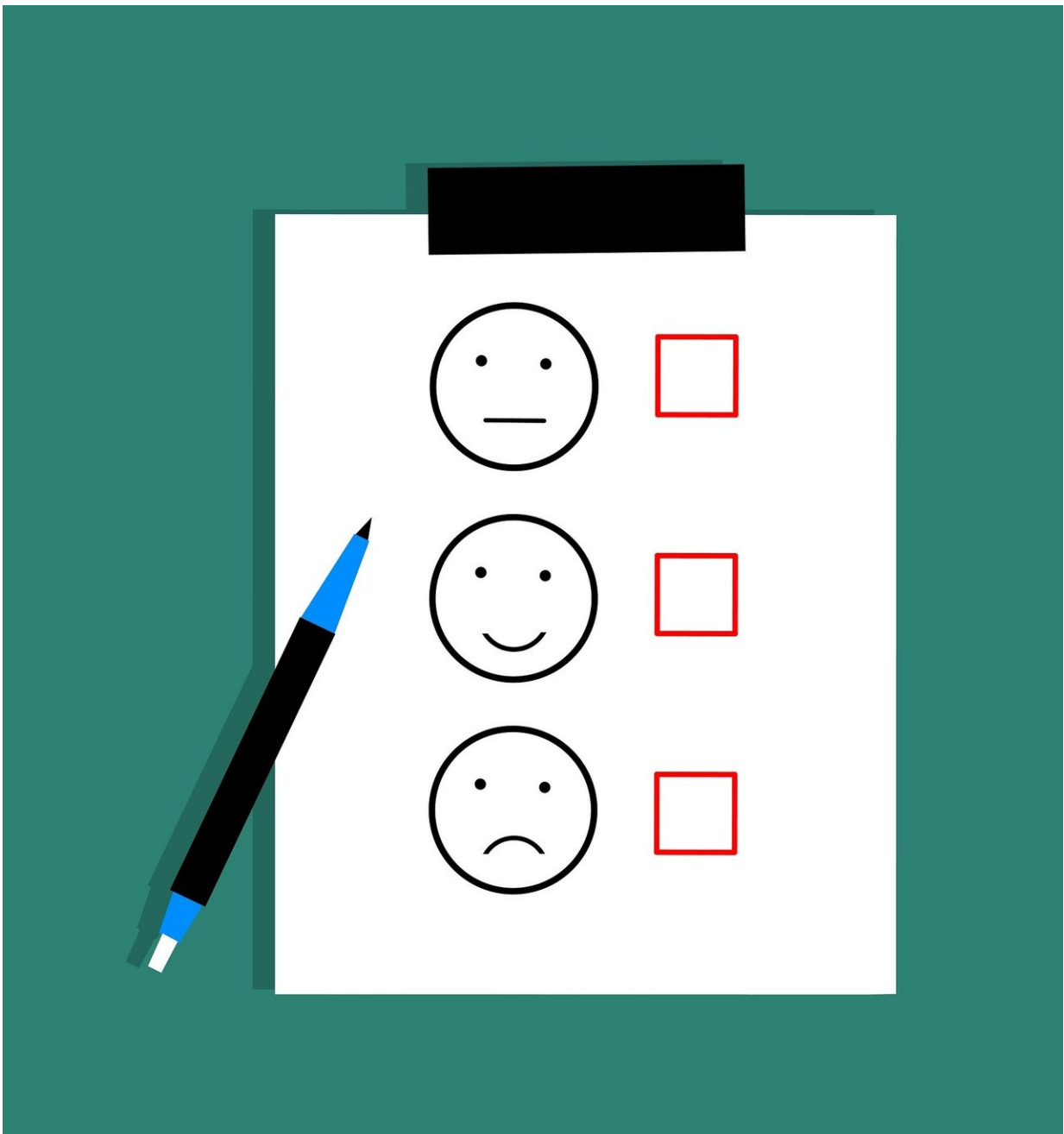


Consumers value products more on sunny and snowy days but not when it rains

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Weather is an ever-present force in consumers' daily lives, yet there is little marketing research on how it affects consumers and businesses. A new UBC Sauder School of Business study reveals that sunny and snowy conditions trigger consumers to mentally visualize using products associated with the respective weather, which leads to consumers placing a higher value on them. Researchers also found the link between weather and higher product valuation only works for products that are related to being outside.

For example, if the product is a beach towel, and the sun is out—a customer is not just looking at the beach towel, they are likely imagining themselves lying on the beach towel in the sun, increasing the value of the product in the customer's mind.

"We think the mental simulation only works in sunshine and snow because these [weather conditions](#) have a [positive association](#) with outside activities," said JoAndrea Hoegg, study co-author and UBC Sauder associate professor. "There are not many activities that are enabled by rain. Most products associated with the rain, such as rain coats and umbrellas, are just to protect oneself against the rain and not to enable activities."

For the study, the researchers analyzed sales data over a one-year period from a large online auction site and the coinciding weather conditions of when and where those purchases took place. The researchers also analyzed the number of images displayed to consumers for each product to measure the degree of mental simulation → the more images that were

shown, the easier it was for customers to mentally simulate themselves using the products.

The researchers also conducted online surveys where participants were asked about the weather outside, and then were shown products that were either for indoor or outdoor use to determine how the participants value the products.

Hoegg suggests that companies that sell a wide range of products online can benefit most from the insights that this research provides. Online sellers often use algorithms to determine what products to feature and how those [products](#) are priced. These algorithms will take different seasons into account, but not the daily weather in the locations where their customers are. Incorporating the constantly updated data from a weather-tracking website into an online seller's algorithms would allow them to take advantage of the effects of [mental simulation](#) and increased product valuation.

It's also important for companies to note that if a product is poorly designed or unattractive, the positive [weather](#) effect will backfire, because if a customer imagines an activity using a poor-quality product, they're less likely to purchase it.

More information: Tobias Schlager et al, How and when weather boosts consumer product valuation, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (2020). [DOI: 10.1007/s11747-019-00717-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00717-y)

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