

Consumption | Individual communication

IC - (21372) - YOU GET WHAT YOU DEFINE - OPERATIONALIZATIONS INDUCE DIFFERENT FORMS OF AWE EXPERIENCES AND PARTLY PREDICT PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOR

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Background and objectives

Experiences of extraordinary vastness (e.g., when seeing impressive nature scenes) and the need to accommodate one's mental structures in order to incorporate these experiences are called *awe experiences*. They contain a big potential for changing people's view of the world. However, definitions and operationalizations of awe diverge considerably within this growing research field.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

We tested the hypothesis that awe experiences associated with autobiographical elicitors result in a stronger need for accommodation (NFA) than those associated with universal elicitors. Moreover, we examined awe's effects on pro-environmental behavior. In an online experimental between-subject design, participants ($N = 320$) were either asked to remember and report a personal awe experience, to imagine and report a universal awe experience, or to watch a series of photographs that are validated as inducing awe. Subsequently, we measured the central components of awe (need for accommodation, actual accommodation, vastness, and connectedness), the ecological worldview, and the intended and situational pro-environmental behavior.

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

The way of inducing awe influenced the NFA: Compared to visual perception, NFA was significantly stronger when reporting awe experiences ($d = 0.65$). Contrary to our hypothesis, the type of awe experience did not affect NFA (i.e., no difference between autobiographical and universal experiences). As expected, the influence of awe on pro-environmental behavior was fully mediated by the ecological worldview.

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

The current study contributes to the construct definition and valid operationalization of awe.

Palavras-chave : awe, pro-environmental behavior, ecological worldview, need for accommodation, operationalization of awe, definition of awe