INTRODUCTION

Awe is a unique positive emotion comprised of two crucial factors: it being a feeling in response to something vast and its ability to inspire a need for accommodation or the need to change one’s frame of mind (Keltner & Haidt, 2003). Prior research has found empirical evidence for nature stimuli (e.g., vast sweeping landscapes) (Piff, et al., Rudd, et al., 2012; Shiota et al., 2006; 2007; Valsecchi, et al., 2014), and social stimuli (e.g., the example of someone selflessly sacrificing for others) (Shiota et al., 2006; Yaden et al., 2016) to elicit perceived vastness and result in feelings of awe. However, the effect of social stimuli to elicit a need for accommodation has not been specifically addressed.

PURPOSE

To further investigate the effect of social elicitors on a need for accommodation.

HYPOTHESIS

Social elicitors of awe will positively relate to a need for accommodation.

METHODS

Participants

Participants included 250 undergraduate students; 67.2% females, 81.2% White; mean age = 20.74 years (SD = 2.599).

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to one of six experimental conditions (See Figure 1).

Measures

- Awe Experience Scale (AWE-S): α = .90 (Yaden, et al., 2018).
- Appraisals of Awe Related Experiences (APRS): α = .72 (Shiota et al., 2007).
- Moral Elevation: α = .95 (Aquino & McFerran, 2011)

RESULTS

A significant main effect was found. As hypothesized, both nature and social elicitors resulted in significantly higher need for accommodation scores compared to the humor conditions (See Table 2 and Fig. 1).

Table 1. Study Condition and Sample Size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Variable Grouping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature Senses Audio</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Social Elicitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Senses Video</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Social Elicitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama and Nature Audio</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Social Elicitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awe Nature Video</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Nature Elicitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor Audio</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor Video</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Controls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Need for Accommodation Tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Between Subject ANOVA Test</th>
<th>F(2, 247) = 19.682</th>
<th>p = .001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post Hoc Comparisons (Scheffe Correction)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Controls to Nature Elicitors</td>
<td>F(1, 16) = 4.04</td>
<td>a = .013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls to Social Elicitors</td>
<td>F(1, 16) = 5.984</td>
<td>b = .051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Elicitors to Social Elicitors</td>
<td>F(1, 16) = 2.062</td>
<td>c = .963</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS

Interacting with nature can leave us awestruck by the vastness of the stimuli and encourages a need for accommodation; however, it may be that participants are left with little direction, thereafter. In contrast, social elicitors may inspire an increased motivation to adopt additional morals or perhaps result in greater introspection. A need for accommodation may pave a welcome path to personal introspection and explain an increase of prosocial behavior seen in prior studies.
Sources of accommodation: The influence of nature versus social elicitors of awe

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References


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