

Introduction

Materialism:

Materialism is a worldview in which material possessions hold central importance. People high in materialism tend to view acquiring possessions as centrally important to their lives, pursue happiness through the acquisition of material goods, and judge others and expect to be judged on the basis of their material possessions.

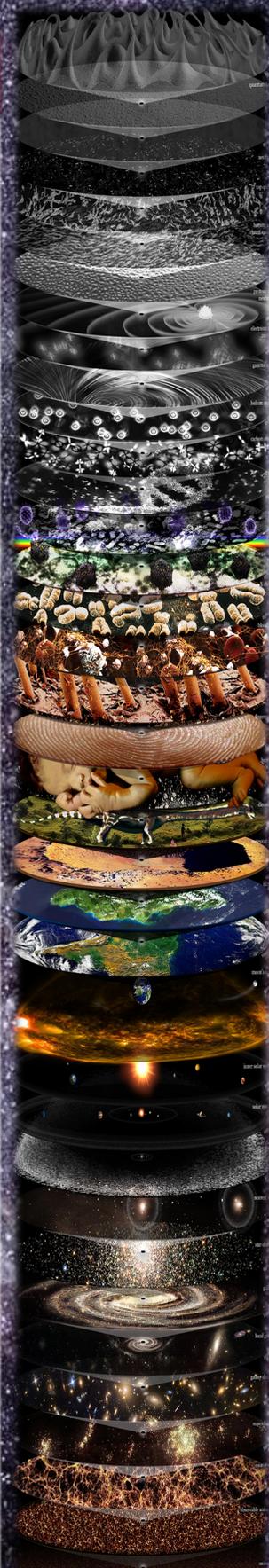
Awe:

Awe is an emotional reaction which involves a self-transcendent shift in one's frame of reference or perspective and a sudden fascination with a particular stimulus. Experiences which elicit awe tend to expand or contradict individuals' understanding of the world, and can involve art, nature, and new information or concepts, among other sources. Past research has shown that experiencing awe can reduce materialist motivations and increase prosociality.

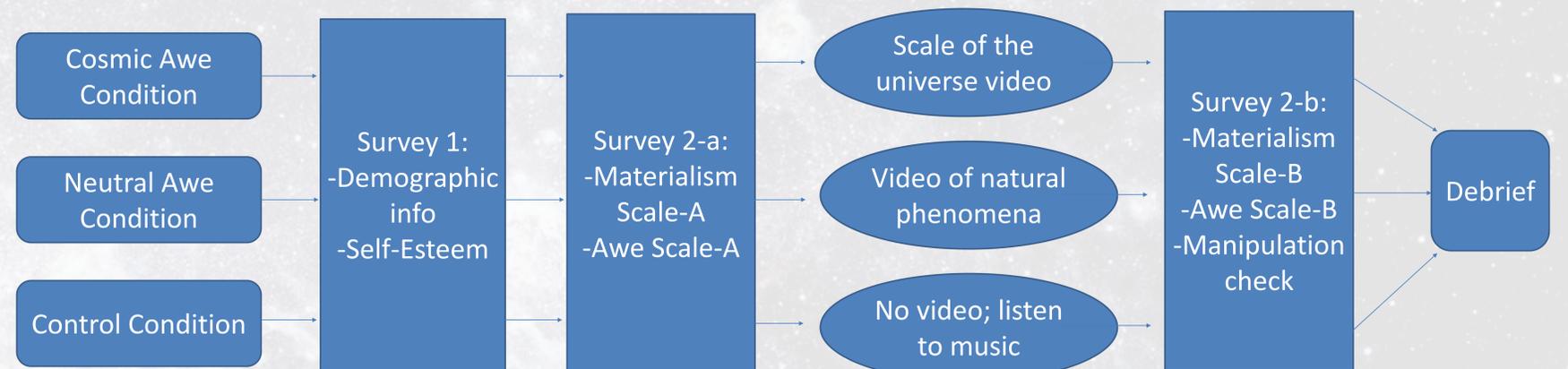
Other research has shown that experiencing self-diminishing awe has different effects on people with low or high self-esteem, such that self-esteem acts as a buffer against the existential threat presented.

The Present Research:

It is hypothesized that experiencing self-diminishing awe will reduce materialist values and beliefs more than neutral awe or the control condition, and that this effect will be greater for individuals with higher self-esteem than individuals with low self-esteem.



Methods



Overview:

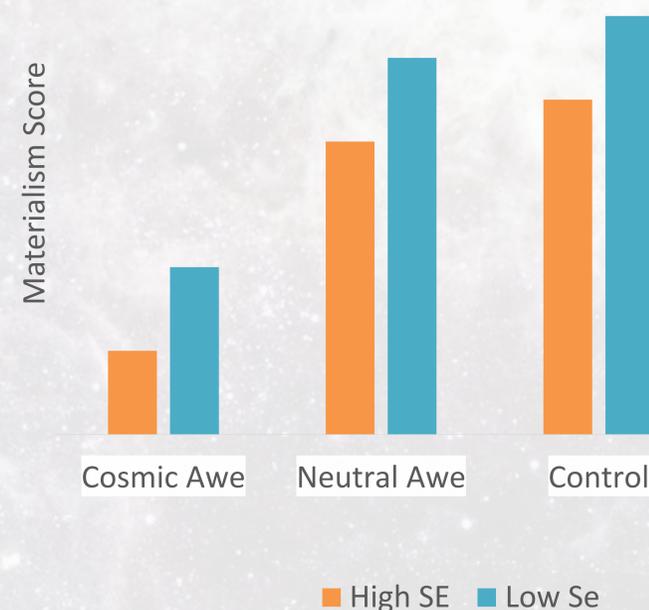
- **IV:** Self-Diminishing Sense of Awe
- **DV:** Endorsement of Materialism
- **Format:** Online Survey
- **Participants:** MacEwan Undergraduate Students

Procedure:

Participants will be randomly assigned to one of three conditions, then asked to complete a demographics survey including a measure of self-esteem. Participants will then complete one half of a materialism scale and of an awe scale, either be shown a video conveying the scale of the universe, a compilation of videos of natural phenomena including plants and animals, or no video, and just the same music as was included in either of the awe condition videos. Following the manipulation, participants will complete the second half of the materialism and awe measures, and then be debriefed.

Expected Results

Expected Scores After Manipulation:



Discussion

The present research is intended to investigate the effects of self-diminishing awe on endorsement of materialist values and beliefs. Previous research has shown that awe can reduce selfish motivations and increase one's tendency towards generosity and helping behaviours, as well as shifting people's values and goals from material to social matters, and from extrinsic motivations to intrinsic motivations. If this study shows the expected results, then we will have demonstrated that experiencing this kind of awe can expand people's frame of reference and concern away from the self and their immediate lives enough to reduce materialist values. These results would also demonstrate the difference between experiences of awe which are self-diminishing and awe which does not involve the self in creating this effect on materialism.