

# Tendency to Feel Awe in Museums

## Research and Evaluation Executive Summary

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### Goal

The Museum conducted a larger study about how guests feel awe and how the feeling impacts memories of learning during their visit. The study was done at the Museum and at similar art and science cultural institutions. As part of the study, a survey was given to guests that measured “dispositional awe,” or the tendency to feel awe-related emotions in life.

### Why

The data was not related to the core aspects of the study, so were not included in our final publications. However, we felt it was interesting enough to share as a separate Executive Summary.

### What

We used the awe subscale from the Dispositional Positive Emotions Scale from Shiota, Keltner & John, (2006)<sup>1</sup>.

### Who

550 guests leaving eight science and art institutions were given the survey as part of a delayed post-test about one week after their visit.

### How

Survey was given online.

### When

Data was collected September–November, 2018.

### Results

The mean composite score was 4.32 (.93). There are differences between the tendencies to feel awe among guests by institution type. Art museum guests reported mean scores of 4.45 (.91) and science center guests reported mean scores of 4.21 (.94)<sup>2</sup>. We found a small, positive correlation between DPES-Awe and the composite learning scores [ $r = .10$ ,  $p = .02$ ], meaning the tendency to feel awe was associated with increased evidence of self-reported learning experiences.

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Project Lead: A. Price & J. Greenslit  
Executive Summary Prepared By: A. Price, 8/6/1029

For more information: An academic paper with more information about the larger study has been submitted to a peer-review journal and is being reviewed. A copy can be obtained upon request to [msiresearch@msichicago.org](mailto:msiresearch@msichicago.org)

<sup>1</sup>Shiota, M. N., Keltner, D., & John, O. P. (2006). Positive emotion dispositions differentially associated with Big Five personality and attachment style. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1(2), 61-71.

<sup>2</sup> $F(1,548) = 9.29, p = .002$

<b>Denver Zoo</b>	<b>Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago</b>	<b>Minneapolis Institute of Art</b>	<b>National Museum of Mexican Art</b>
<b>Shedd Aquarium</b>	<b>Art Institute of Chicago</b>	<b>Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago</b>	<b>DePaul Art Museum</b>

Table 1. Data Was Collected from these Institutions