

Research Article

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The Role of Awe Emotion in the Attitude–Behavioral Intention Relationship: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: *This article presents a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) supported by bibliometric analysis to map how awe emotion relates to tourists' attitudes and behavioral intentions, including revisit intention, with particular attention to evidence concerning moderation and mediation. Literature was gathered from Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SAGE Journals, Taylor & Francis, and Wiley Online Library, covering studies published between 2015 and 2026 together with selected foundational references. Keyword mapping identified five thematic clusters: (1) awe and emotional experience, (2) pro-environmental and responsible behavior, (3) attitude and behavioral intention, (4) tourism antecedents such as motivation, past experience, and perceived constraints, and (5) moderation and mediation mechanisms. The findings indicate that awe is consistently associated with behavioral outcomes and may strengthen the translation of positive evaluations or motivations into behavioral intentions in particular contexts. However, the evidence base is more extensive for mediation than for awe as a pure moderator, and some moderation evidence concerns destination residents rather than tourists. Accordingly, claims about moderation should be interpreted as an emerging research direction rather than an established general effect. The review identifies a research gap concerning the integration of travel motivation, past experience, perceived constraints, attitude, awe, and revisit intention within a single empirical framework, particularly in Indonesian tourism contexts.*

Keywords: *Awe Emotion; Attitude; Behavioral Intention; Moderation; Revisit Intention; Systematic Literature Review.*

Introduction

Tourism research has increasingly recognized that tourists' behavioral intentions are shaped not only by rational evaluations of destinations but also by emotional, experiential, and contextual factors. Among the psychological constructs commonly examined in tourism research, attitude occupies an important position because it reflects an individual's favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a destination, tourism activity, or particular behavior. Within the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), attitude is regarded as one of the central determinants of behavioral intention, together with subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). In tourism contexts, this theoretical relationship has been widely applied to explain intentions to visit, revisit, recommend destinations, and engage in responsible or pro-environmental behaviors. Nevertheless, the relationship between attitude and behavioral intention should not necessarily be understood as uniform across tourists or destination contexts. Differences in emotional experiences, situational conditions, previous experiences, motivations, and perceived constraints may influence the extent to which favorable attitudes are translated into actual behavioral intentions.

The importance of contextual and experiential factors is particularly evident in studies of revisit intention. Revisit intention represents an important behavioral outcome because it reflects tourists' willingness to return to a destination after a previous tourism experience. Huang and Hsu (2009), for example, demonstrated that travel motivation, past experience, perceived constraints, and attitude are interconnected in explaining revisit intention. Their framework illustrates that tourists do not form

behavioral intentions independently of their previous experiences and perceived circumstances. Positive attitudes may encourage revisit intentions, but the strength of this relationship can be affected by the characteristics of the tourism experience and by barriers that tourists perceive. Crawford and Godbey's (1987) framework similarly emphasizes that constraints may emerge at intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural levels, potentially limiting participation even when individuals possess positive motivations or evaluations. These perspectives provide an important foundation for examining additional psychological variables that may explain why similar positive attitudes do not always result in equally strong behavioral intentions.

One emotional construct that has attracted increasing attention in contemporary tourism research is awe. Awe is generally conceptualized as a self-transcendent emotion arising when individuals encounter a stimulus perceived to be sufficiently vast or extraordinary that it challenges their existing mental frameworks and requires cognitive accommodation (Keltner & Haidt, 2003). The experience of awe differs from more conventional positive emotions such as happiness, pleasure, or satisfaction because it involves both perceived vastness and the need to accommodate existing cognitive structures. Awe may also reduce self-focus and foster feelings of connectedness to something larger than the self. In tourism settings, these characteristics make awe particularly relevant because tourists frequently encounter extraordinary landscapes, monumental architecture, cultural heritage, religious sites, and other experiences capable of producing perceptions of vastness and transcendence (Wang & Lyu, 2019).

The tourism literature has increasingly demonstrated that awe can influence tourists' psychological states and behavioral outcomes. Wang and Lyu (2019), for instance, examined how tourism experiences can inspire awe and identified consequences associated with this emotional state. More recent studies have connected awe with pro-environmental behavior, responsible tourism behavior, ecological learning, and tourism activity preferences. Liu et al. (2023) found that awe can function as a mediating mechanism linking ecological experiential learning with tourists' pro-environmental behavioral intentions, particularly through its relationship with nature connection. Zhang et al. (2024) similarly examined awe in religious tourism and demonstrated its relevance to pro-environmental behavior. These findings indicate that awe is not merely an emotional response to extraordinary tourism stimuli but can constitute an important psychological mechanism through which tourism experiences influence subsequent evaluations and behavioral intentions.

However, an important conceptual distinction needs to be made between mediation and moderation when examining the role of awe. Mediation concerns the mechanism through which an independent variable affects an outcome variable. In a mediation framework, awe may explain *how or why* a tourism experience, educational intervention, or other antecedent influences behavioral intention. Moderation, by contrast, concerns the conditions under which the strength or direction of a relationship changes. A moderator therefore addresses *when, for whom, or under what circumstances* the relationship between two variables becomes stronger or weaker. This distinction is particularly important because a substantial portion of the existing awe literature has examined awe as a mediator, whereas considerably less attention has been given to awe as a moderator of the relationship between tourists' attitudes and behavioral intentions.

The distinction is visible in recent empirical studies. Liu et al. (2023) primarily positioned awe as a mediating mechanism between ecological experiential learning and pro-environmental behavioral intentions. Li and Su (2024a) examined the mechanisms through which awe influences tourism activity preferences, with construal level functioning as a mediating mechanism and message appeal affecting the strength of the relationship. Such findings provide valuable evidence regarding the processes through which

awe operates. Nevertheless, they do not directly establish that awe changes the strength of the relationship between tourists' attitudes and their behavioral intentions. Consequently, evidence concerning awe as a moderator should not automatically be inferred from studies in which awe operates as a mediator.

This conceptual issue represents an important gap in the tourism literature. Existing research suggests that tourists who experience awe may demonstrate stronger responsible, pro-environmental, or experience-related behavioral responses. Yet the available literature remains fragmented across different behavioral outcomes, tourism settings, populations, and theoretical mechanisms. Some studies focus on natural tourism, others on religious tourism or environmental education, while still others examine tourism activity preferences. Furthermore, some studies investigate tourists, whereas others focus on destination residents. For example, Liu et al. (2026) examined dispositional awe among destination residents and its relationship with pro-environmental behavioral intentions. Although this study provides useful evidence concerning the potential boundary conditions associated with dispositional awe, its population differs from tourists. Therefore, its findings should be interpreted as conceptually informative rather than direct empirical evidence for tourists' attitude–behavioral intention relationship.

Recent evidence also suggests that the effect of awe is not necessarily uniform across all behavioral outcomes. Liu et al. (2023) found differences in the influence of awe depending on the effort required for pro-environmental behavior. Li and Su (2024a) demonstrated that the effect of awe on tourism activity preferences can depend on psychological mechanisms and message characteristics. Zhang and He (2024) further linked awe to responsible behavioral intentions in a mountainous religious tourism destination. Zhang et al. (2024) examined the interaction between awe and habitual behavior in explaining tourists' pro-environmental behavior in religious settings. Collectively, these studies suggest that the behavioral consequences of awe may depend on individual characteristics, situational factors, destination attributes, and the type of behavior under consideration. However, they do not collectively establish a sufficiently integrated explanation of whether and how awe changes the strength of the attitude–behavioral intention relationship.

The issue becomes even more relevant when the broader antecedents of revisit intention are considered. Huang and Hsu (2009) established an influential framework connecting travel motivation, past experience, perceived constraints, attitude, and revisit intention. Travel motivation represents the reasons tourists choose to travel, while past experience captures the accumulated experiential knowledge associated with previous visits. Perceived constraints represent factors that may prevent or discourage tourism participation, including psychological, social, financial, and time-related barriers. These antecedents provide an established foundation for explaining tourist attitudes and revisit intentions. Nevertheless, the emotional dimension of tourism experiences, particularly awe, has not been sufficiently integrated into this framework as a potential boundary condition affecting the attitude–behavioral intention relationship.

The potential interaction between awe and these antecedents provides an important direction for further research. Tourists whose motivations involve spiritual, transformative, cultural, or nature-oriented experiences may encounter situations that are especially conducive to awe. Likewise, previous tourism experiences involving extraordinary landscapes, heritage sites, or religious environments may influence the likelihood and intensity of subsequent awe experiences. Perceived constraints may also interact conceptually with emotional experiences. A powerful tourism experience may alter the way tourists evaluate the importance of practical barriers such as cost, time, or accessibility. Nevertheless, these

propositions should be treated as research possibilities rather than established empirical conclusions because the existing literature has not sufficiently tested these relationships within an integrated model.

The geographical concentration of existing research also reinforces the need for further investigation. A substantial proportion of contemporary studies on awe and tourism has examined contexts involving natural and religious destinations, with several recent studies focusing on China. While these studies provide important empirical insights, their findings cannot automatically be generalized to other tourism environments. Indonesia, for example, possesses extensive natural landscapes, cultural heritage, maritime destinations, and religious tourism resources that may provide distinctive settings for studying awe. The cultural and geographical characteristics of Indonesian destinations may generate tourism experiences that differ from those represented in existing studies. Therefore, empirical research in Indonesia could contribute to understanding whether relationships identified in other contexts are similarly applicable in a different cultural and destination environment.

A systematic examination of the literature is therefore necessary to clarify the current state of knowledge. A systematic literature review (SLR) provides an appropriate approach for identifying, organizing, and synthesizing studies that have examined awe, tourist attitudes, behavioral intentions, and related psychological mechanisms. Unlike a conventional narrative review, an SLR can provide a structured assessment of the development and thematic organization of a research field. When combined with bibliometric analysis, it can also identify patterns of keyword co-occurrence, emerging themes, and relationships among major concepts. In the present study, VOSviewer-based bibliometric mapping is used to complement the systematic review by identifying the thematic structure and temporal development of the literature.

The present review is particularly concerned with clarifying the position of awe within the attitude–behavioral intention relationship. Rather than assuming that awe is already an established moderator, this study examines the extent to which the existing literature provides evidence for such a role and distinguishes explicit moderation evidence from studies that examine awe as a mediator or as a direct predictor. This distinction is essential for avoiding conceptual conflation and for identifying the precise theoretical contribution that future empirical research may provide. The review also considers the relationship between awe and behavioral outcomes such as revisit intention, responsible behavior, and pro-environmental behavior, while recognizing that these outcomes are not interchangeable.

Accordingly, this study has three principal objectives. First, it maps the development and thematic structure of research concerning awe, tourist attitudes, and behavioral intentions. Second, it critically examines how awe has been positioned in existing studies, particularly by distinguishing its mediating, moderating, and direct effects. Third, it identifies research gaps concerning the integration of travel motivation, past travel experience, perceived constraints, tourist attitudes, awe, and revisit intention within a coherent conceptual framework. Through these objectives, the study seeks to establish a more precise foundation for future empirical research rather than presuming a moderating effect that has not yet been adequately demonstrated.

The contribution of this study is therefore primarily conceptual and integrative. By systematically organizing fragmented findings across tourism, psychology, and behavioral research, the review clarifies what is currently known about awe and what remains insufficiently tested. In particular, it highlights the distinction between evidence showing that awe *explains* behavioral responses and evidence suggesting that awe *changes the strength* of the attitude–behavioral intention relationship. This distinction provides a basis for developing future research models in which awe can be empirically tested as a boundary condition,

while travel motivation, past experience, and perceived constraints can be incorporated as antecedent variables and attitude as a potential mediating construct.

Overall, the literature suggests that awe is an increasingly important emotional construct in tourism research, but its precise role in the attitude–behavioral intention relationship remains insufficiently established. Existing evidence provides strong conceptual and empirical grounds for studying awe, yet the predominance of mediation-oriented research and the fragmentation of tourism contexts indicate that further investigation is necessary. By combining systematic literature review with bibliometric analysis, this study seeks to clarify the current knowledge structure, identify the limitations of existing evidence, and formulate a theoretically grounded research agenda for examining awe in tourist behavioral intentions, particularly revisit intention. This approach is expected to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how emotional experiences may interact with established cognitive evaluations in shaping tourists' future behavioral intentions.

Method

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach combined with bibliometric keyword analysis to map research on awe in relation to tourist attitudes and behavioral intentions. The selection and reporting process was structured around the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to improve transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor. The review period was standardized to 2015–2026, while older foundational works were retained only when they were necessary to establish the theoretical basis of the constructs.

Literature was collected from Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SAGE Journals, Taylor & Francis, and Wiley Online Library. The search strategy used combinations of the terms “awe,” “tourist attitude,” “behavioral intention,” “moderating role,” “mediating role,” and “revisit intention,” applied to article titles, abstracts, and keywords. The searches targeted English-language publications relevant to tourism and related behavioral research. Because the manuscript record supplied for this revision does not contain the original database export or search log, the exact search dates, database-specific search strings, and record counts cannot be reconstructed reliably without introducing unsupported numbers. These items should therefore be reported from the authors' original search records rather than estimated retrospectively.

The screening process consisted of identification, duplicate removal, title and abstract screening, and full-text assessment. Inclusion criteria covered empirical, conceptual, and review studies that explicitly addressed awe in a tourism-related context and examined or informed relationships involving attitudes, behavioral intentions, revisit intention, pro-environmental behavior, or responsible behavior. Studies were required to be published in English during 2015–2026, while selected earlier foundational references were retained for theoretical grounding. Descriptive articles that did not address relevant relationships, conference papers, editorials, and book reviews were excluded. For full PRISMA reporting, the final manuscript should state the exact number of records identified, duplicates removed, records screened, full texts assessed, and studies included, based on the authors' search and screening log.

The included literature was then examined through keyword co-occurrence analysis. The original manuscript reports three VOSviewer-style visualizations: network, overlay, and density maps. Because the VOSviewer desktop application was not available in the computing environment used for this manuscript, the visualizations were reproduced programmatically from a manually coded keyword co-occurrence matrix. In this procedure, keywords were extracted from the selected articles, standardized for spelling and conceptual equivalence, counted for co-occurrence, and represented using the same general visual

conventions: node size reflects occurrence weight, links represent co-occurrence relationships, and colors indicate thematic or temporal groupings. This reproduction should be understood as a visualization of the coded matrix rather than as a direct VOSviewer software output. The manuscript therefore avoids treating the reproduced maps as evidence of statistical estimation and uses them primarily to support thematic interpretation.

To improve coding reliability, the selected article abstracts and keywords were repeatedly cross-checked against the original records. Differences in interpretation were resolved through consensus discussion. The keyword threshold used in the mapping should be reported together with the number of keywords retained and the rationale for that threshold; because the original threshold value is not documented in the supplied manuscript, no numerical threshold is added here. The final synthesis grouped the literature into five broad themes: awe and emotional experiences, pro-environmental behavior, attitudes and behavioral intentions, tourism antecedents, and moderation and mediation mechanisms.

Results and Discussion

Keyword network analysis indicates that awe, attitude, and behavioral intention occupy prominent positions in the mapped literature and are connected through terms associated with moderation and mediation. This pattern suggests two broad thematic domains—emotional tourism experiences and attitude–behavioral intention processes—with moderation and mediation functioning as conceptual links. Because the map is based on keyword co-occurrence rather than effect-size synthesis, the visualization should be interpreted as evidence of thematic association rather than proof that awe statistically moderates the attitude–intention relationship.

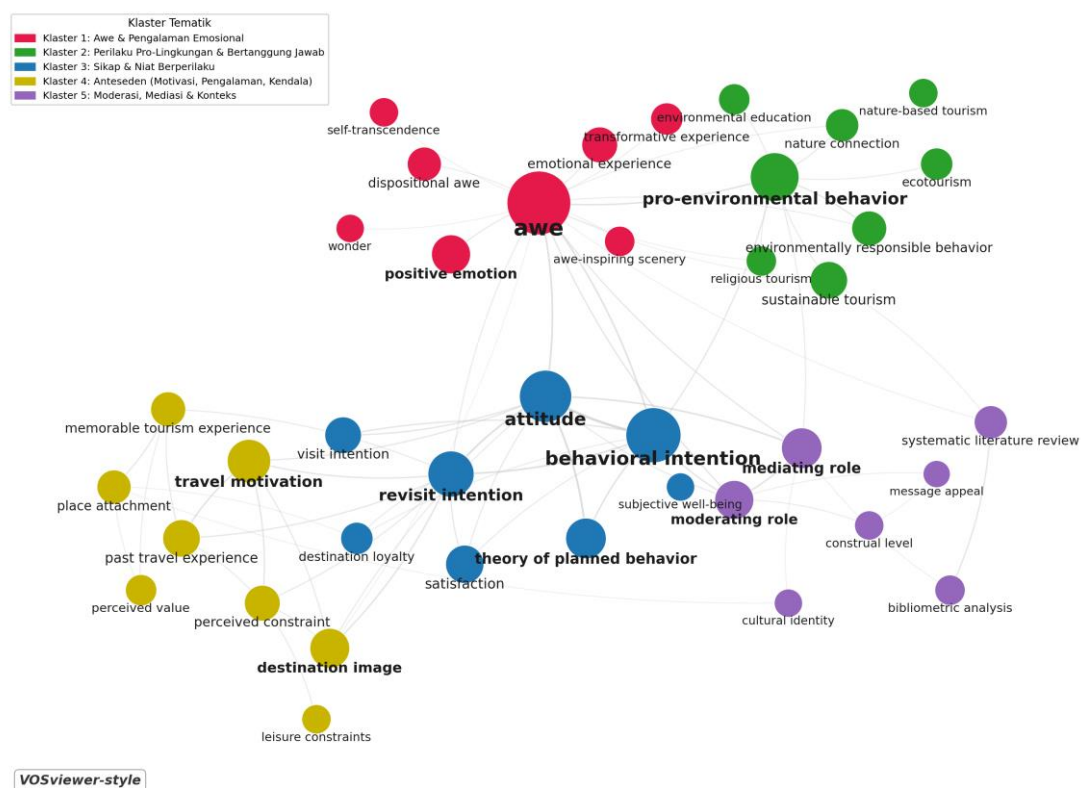


Figure 1. Network Visualization Keywords

Figure 1 shows five interconnected thematic clusters. The first cluster (red) centers on awe and is associated with dispositional awe, positive emotion, emotional experience, transformative experience, wonder, and self-transcendence. This pattern is consistent with Keltner and Haidt's (2003) conceptualization of awe through vastness and the need for accommodation.

The second cluster (green) includes pro-environmental behavior, environmentally responsible behavior, environmental education, nature connection, ecotourism, sustainable tourism, religious tourism, and nature-based tourism. Its proximity to the awe cluster is consistent with studies linking awe to pro-environmental outcomes, including evidence involving nature connection and religious-tourism settings (Liu et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). These studies, however, should not be interpreted as establishing a general moderating effect of awe.

The third cluster (blue) focuses on attitude and behavioral intention and includes revisit intention, visit intention, the Theory of Planned Behavior, satisfaction, and destination loyalty. Its connection with awe and moderation/mediation terms indicates that the two constructs are discussed within the same broader knowledge structure. The bibliometric proximity does not itself demonstrate that awe modifies the attitude–intention relationship; rather, it identifies an area in which moderation and mediation have both been discussed (Ajzen, 1991).

The fourth cluster (yellow) contains travel motivation, past travel experience, perceived constraints, destination image, memorable tourism experience, place attachment, and leisure constraints. These variables have established relationships with tourist attitudes and revisit intentions (Huang & Hsu, 2009; Crawford & Godbey, 1987) and provide an important antecedent stream that can be connected conceptually to research on awe.

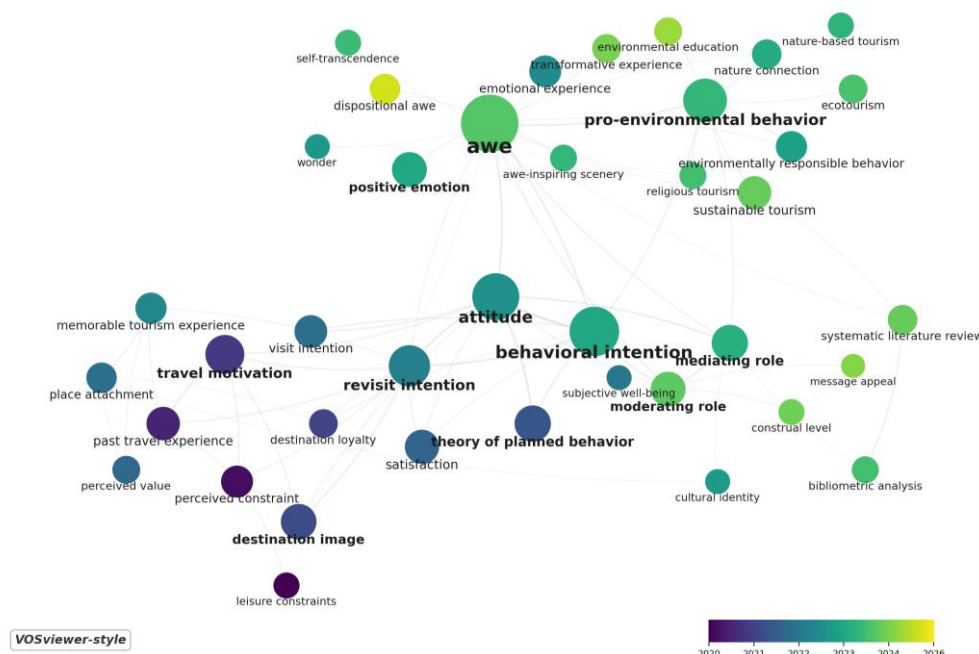


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization (Temporal Distribution) of Keywords

The overlay visualization in Figure 2 depicts the temporal evolution of keywords based on the average publication year, with dark purple representing earlier literature and yellow representing more recent literature. This map reveals clear historical layers: theoretical foundations on travel barriers and attitudes–

behavioral intentions emerged first, giving way to a much more recent and still-evolving wave of awe research.

Keywords such as leisure constraints, perceived constraints, destination image, and past travel experience occupy the dark areas (2020 and earlier), reflecting established conceptual roots dating back to Crawford and Godbey's (1987) leisure constraints framework and Huang and Hsu's (2009) revisit intention model. Conversely, keywords such as dispositional awe, environmental education, construal level, message appeal, and bibliometric analysis occupy the light areas (2024–2026), indicating that research on the mechanisms and boundary conditions of awe's influence is the most recent wave of research.

The pattern across the temporal visualization suggests a development trajectory from established research on motivation, experience, constraints, attitudes, and revisit intention toward more recent research on awe and the conditions under which emotional experiences may influence tourism behavior. This temporal pattern indicates the emergence of awe as an additional explanatory construct, but it does not by itself establish whether awe operates as a mediator, moderator, or direct predictor in particular studies.

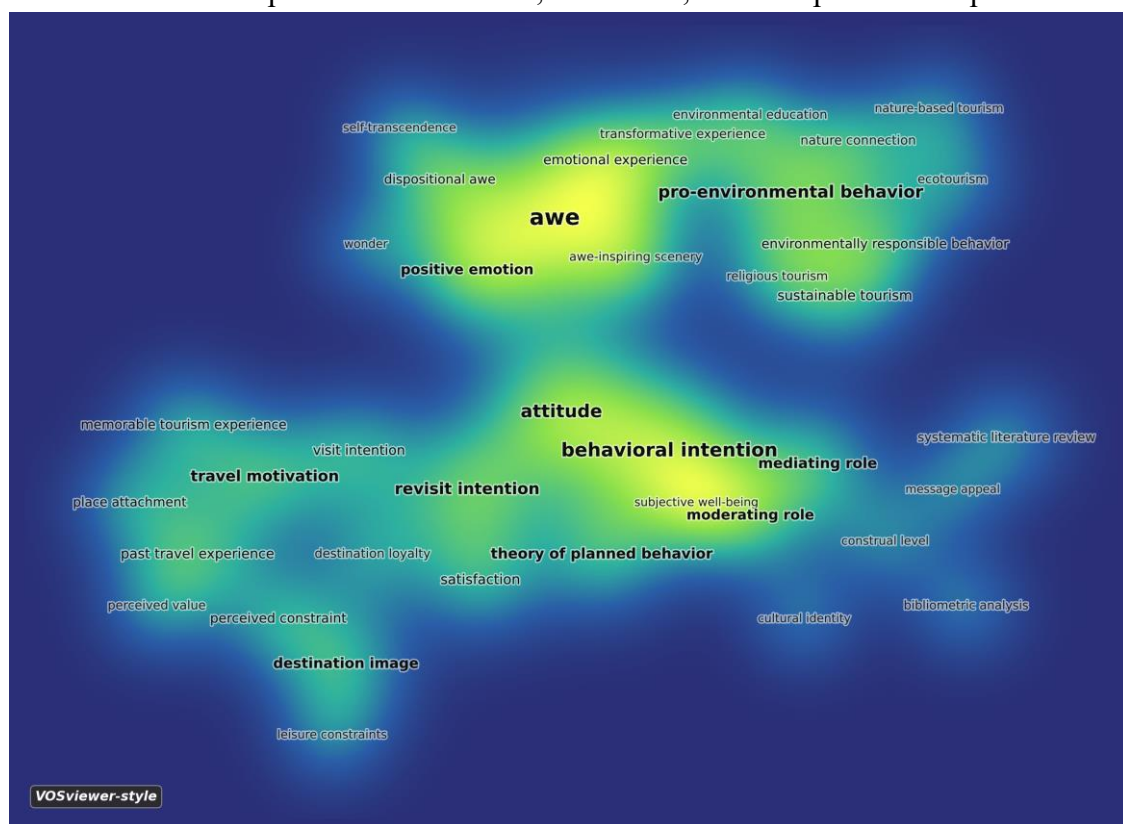


Figure 3. Density Visualization (Density Map) Keywords

The density visualization in Figure 3 shows high concentrations around awe/pro-environmental behavior and attitude/behavioral intention, with moderation and mediation terms forming a less dense connecting area. This pattern supports the interpretation that awe and behavioral outcomes are well represented in the literature, whereas explicit moderation mechanisms remain less developed. The density map should therefore be treated as a descriptive representation of keyword concentration rather than as evidence of the magnitude or direction of causal effects.

The antecedent cluster—including travel motivation, past travel experience, perceived constraints, destination image, memorable tourism experience, and place attachment—shows a degree of separation from the highest-density awe cluster. This separation identifies a potentially useful research opportunity:

integrating established antecedents of revisit intention with emotional variables such as awe. However, the present bibliometric evidence cannot establish that such integration has a specific causal or moderating effect.

Awe Emotions in Tourism Research

Awe is a self-transcendent emotion that arises when an individual encounters a stimulus perceived as so large or extraordinary (vastness) that it challenges existing frameworks of understanding and demands cognitive adjustment (need for accommodation) (Keltner & Haidt, 2003). Unlike common positive emotions such as joy, awe typically fosters a sense of smallness and connectedness to something larger, whether it be nature, monumental architecture, or religious practices (Wang & Lyu, 2019).

In the context of tourism, destinations rich in grandeur—mountains, world heritage sites, monumental religious structures—have consistently been identified as key triggers of awe experiences (Li & Su, 2024a; Zhang et al., 2024). Recent studies have also introduced the concept of dispositional awe, a relatively stable individual tendency to experience awe across situations, which has been shown to influence destination residents' pro-environmental behavioral intentions independently of the intensity of the situational awe experience (Liu, Huang, Yu, Li, & Hu, 2026). This distinction between situational and dispositional awe is important for designing studies examining awe as a moderator, as the two forms of awe potentially have different moderating powers.

Tourist Attitudes as Predictors of Behavioral Intentions

Tourist attitudes represent affective and cognitive evaluations of a particular destination or tourism behavior, and theoretically serve as direct predictors of behavioral intentions in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Huang and Hsu (2009) empirically demonstrated that attitudes mediate the influence of travel motivation, past experiences, and perceived barriers on revisit intentions—a classic finding that remains the primary reference in modeling tourists' revisit intentions.

The bibliometric visualization in this review shows that attitude remains one of the nodes with the highest weight, confirming its irreplaceable position in the tourism knowledge structure. However, the strength of the relationship between attitude and behavioral intention is not constant; recent literature indicates that this relationship can be strengthened or weakened by emotional variables such as awe, as indicated by the proximity of the attitude node to moderating and mediating roles in the network map.

Behavioral Intention and Revisit Intention

Behavioral intention, including revisit intention, is the most frequently tested outcome variable in the attitude cluster. Besides being directly predicted by attitude, behavioral intention is also influenced by satisfaction, destination loyalty, and subjective norms, as required by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Recent studies have extended this framework to specific contexts, such as revisit intention of sports tourists using an expanded Theory of Planned Behavior approach (Gao et al., 2026), and visit intention formed through a heuristic-systematic model of tourism information quality (Hu et al., 2025).

A critical review of the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior in tourism research (Esfandiar & Hadinejad, 2026) also highlights that the classic attitude–norm–behavioral control–intention model is often inadequate in explaining variance in behavioral intentions without incorporating additional emotional or situational variables—an argument that strengthens the relevance of awe as a promising but still under-tested moderator candidate.

The Moderating Role of Awe in the Attitude–Behavioral Intention Relationship

This section addresses the evidence concerning the possible moderating role of awe. The reviewed literature provides indications that awe can condition or accompany the translation of positive evaluations, motivations, or experiences into behavioral outcomes, but the evidence is not uniform and many studies examine mediation rather than moderation. Accordingly, the findings are presented as evidence of an emerging mechanism rather than as confirmation of a general moderating effect among tourists.

Zhang, Jia, Chan, and Sciacca (2024) found an interaction between awe and habitual behavior in relation to pro-environmental behavior among religious tourists. This finding provides direct evidence that an awe-related mechanism can interact with another behavioral condition, but it does not directly test awe as a moderator of the attitude–behavioral intention relationship examined in the present review. Similarly, Zhang and He (2024) reported a positive relationship between awe and responsible behavioral intention in a mountainous religious tourism context. The latter finding concerns association with behavioral intention rather than a direct test of the attitude–intention moderation model.

At the dispositional level, Liu, Huang, Yu, Li, and Hu (2026) reported that dispositional awe moderates the relationship between evaluations of tourism impacts and pro-environmental behavioral intentions among destination residents. This is relevant to the theoretical discussion because it provides direct moderation evidence involving awe, but the population is destination residents rather than tourists. The finding should therefore be treated as conceptually informative rather than directly generalizable to tourist populations.

Other evidence points to mediation and boundary conditions rather than pure moderation. Liu, Yuan, Li, Li, Sun, and Yuan (2023) found that awe mediated the relationship between ecological experiential learning and low-effort pro-environmental behavioral intentions, with weaker evidence for high-effort behaviors. Xu's (2025) systematic review likewise indicates that the empirical literature remains dominated by quantitative cross-sectional studies and that explicit tests distinguishing moderation from mediation are comparatively limited. Together, these findings support the need for more precise model specification in future tourism research.

Interaction of Awe with Motivation, Past Experience, and Perceived Barriers

Huang and Hsu's (2009) classic model asserts that travel motivation, past travel experiences, and perceived barriers are the three main antecedents of tourists' attitudes and revisit intentions. Perceived barriers, based on Crawford and Godbey's (1987) hierarchical framework, encompass intrapersonal (psychological), interpersonal (social), and structural (practical, such as cost and time) constraints that can hinder behavioral intentions even when tourists have positive motivations and attitudes.

The literature reviewed here does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that travel motivation, past travel experience, and perceived barriers systematically interact with awe as a moderator of the attitude–behavioral intention relationship in tourists. Instead, these variables represent an established antecedent stream that can be integrated with the emerging awe literature. The distance between the antecedent and awe clusters in Figure 3 is therefore interpreted as a bibliometric indication of limited thematic integration, not as direct evidence of a statistical interaction.

Travel motivations oriented toward transformative or spiritual experiences may plausibly be associated with stronger awe experiences, while past travel experiences containing awe may contribute to memorable tourism experiences and place attachment. These propositions are useful for future model development, but they require direct empirical testing before being presented as established interaction

effects. The same caution applies to perceived barriers: although awe may change how tourists interpret an experience, the available literature reviewed here does not establish that awe reliably offsets the effects of practical or psychological constraints on revisit intention.

Methodological Gaps and Further Research Directions

Several methodological gaps can be identified from this review. First, the literature is dominated by cross-sectional quantitative designs, limiting the ability to capture changes in awe experiences and behavioral intentions over time (Xu, 2025). Second, a substantial portion of the evidence is drawn from specific geographic and destination contexts, particularly natural and religious tourism settings, while Indonesian destinations remain comparatively underrepresented. Third, the literature contains substantially more work on awe as a mediator or direct correlate of behavioral outcomes than on awe as a pure moderator of the attitude–behavioral intention relationship. Fourth, studies differ in population, outcome, and construct operationalization, making direct comparison difficult. These limitations reinforce the need for longitudinal, mixed-method, and explicitly interaction-based research designs.

The reviewed literature is concentrated in Q1 and Q2 outlets represented in the selected database set, while studies specifically testing awe moderation remain less common across the wider journal landscape. This observation is descriptive of the literature identified in the review and should not be interpreted as evidence that journal quartile determines the quality or validity of the findings. More importantly, the distribution highlights that the conceptual development of awe has progressed faster than the accumulation of direct moderation tests in tourism populations.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review, supported by bibliometric keyword analysis, maps research on awe in relation to tourist attitudes and behavioral intentions. Network, temporal, and density patterns indicate five interconnected thematic clusters: awe and emotional experiences, pro-environmental behavior, attitudes and behavioral intentions, tourism antecedents, and moderation/mediation mechanisms. The literature is thematically connected, but the mechanisms are not yet integrated into a sufficiently consistent empirical framework.

The review indicates that awe is consistently associated with behavioral outcomes in tourism and can be relevant to responsible, pro-environmental, and revisit-related intentions. However, the evidence is stronger for mediation and direct associations than for awe as a pure moderator of the attitude–behavioral intention relationship. Direct moderation evidence is also not always drawn from tourist samples; for example, Liu et al. (2026) studied destination residents. Consequently, the present review supports treating moderation as an emerging research direction rather than as an established general effect. The strength and direction of the relationship may vary by behavior, individual characteristics, and destination context.

The most prominent research gap concerns the limited integration of travel motivation, past travel experience, perceived barriers, attitude, awe, and revisit intention within a single empirically tested framework. The bibliometric evidence indicates that these streams coexist but remain only partially integrated. This gap provides a basis for future research, including studies in Indonesian destinations where natural, cultural, and religious settings may provide relevant contexts for examining awe.

Based on the evidence reviewed, destination managers may consider the documented capacity of particular tourism settings and narratives to evoke awe as one component of experience design, while recognizing that the behavioral consequences are context dependent. Future researchers should explicitly

distinguish mediation from moderation, use tourist samples when making tourist-specific claims, and report interaction terms when testing moderation. An integrated model could examine travel motivations, past travel experiences, and perceived barriers as antecedents; attitude as a mediating construct; awe as a potential moderator; and revisit intention as an outcome. Longitudinal and mixed-method designs would also help clarify how awe develops over the course of tourism experiences.

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