

Time Is Running! Should I Run Too? Time Metaphors Affect Consumer Response to the Perceived Speed of Time

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Abstract

Most people experience time as if it is a limited commodity, something not to be wasted. We propose that subjective experience of time serves as a cue that people use to infer their speed, an indication as to how wasteful they are with their time. The results of four experiments show that when time is perceived to have passed quickly, people speed up to compensate for the lost time. Whether one conceptualizes herself as a moving agent on a stationary timeline or a stationary agent on a moving timeline moderates this effect. People who conceptualize themselves as moving agents are more likely to infer their speed from the speed of time, and become faster (slower) when they experience time passing unexpectedly quickly (slowly). As a result, they suffer from cognitive trade-offs, such as accuracy and impulsivity, more than those who conceptualize themselves as stationary agents on a moving timeline.

Keywords: *Time ; Perception; Metaphor*

Track: Consumer Behaviour