

Making a Judgment Call on the Passage of Time: Speed vs. Duration

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Abstract

The study of temporal experience engages a myriad of fruitful, yet disparate streams of enquiry. To consolidate efforts, research pertaining to Subjective Time Estimation (STE) and Passage of Time Judgment (POTJ) may benefit from more of a 'shared' platform of thought. Curiously, these seemingly estranged domains of enquiry constitute two sides of the same coin; especially, when conceptualising the passageway of time as an estimation of duration cognitively arrived at. Herein exists a judgment call; an engagement of cognitive resources. In the Here and Now the need for a judgment call allocates attentional resources across time and/or task. Of import, attentional resources are unique from memory (stored and/or working). Nevertheless, in spite of such a narrow focus within STE and POTJ research - primarily that of duration, i.e., 'how long has it been?' – especially since Covid-19 struck, POTJ research has morphed into a study of speed, i.e., 'how fast or slow?' as well as time experienced as a feeling, akin to a Quality of Experience (QoE). How time feels to be passing by, is synonymous with the emotional nostalgia of losing track of time, i.e., 'Time Flies When Having Fun'. Still, how we think about time's passage (i.e., cognitive rationale) conceptually compared to how we feel about time's passage (i.e., emotional resonance) constitute unique sources of variability, which we propose be treated as distinct. Overall, this paper seeks to build a bridge across seemingly disparate fields of enquiry, as well as provide a glimpse of the trajectory of POTJ research.

Keywords: Cognition; Emotion; Subjective Time Estimation/STE