

Department of Marketing



Research Seminars Series

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The Speed of Awesome: Slow and Fast Motion Create Awe by Inducing Perceptions of Temporal Vastness

Abstract: Slow-motion and fast-motion videography techniques make apparent changes that are usually imperceptible to people in real time. The current work suggests that slow and fast motion elicit awe in consumers by increasing their awareness of time flow outside their usual experience. Awe is defined as an emotion elicited by perceptually vast stimuli that do not fit easily into existing mental schema and thus need to be accommodated (Keltner and Haidt 2003). According to theory, stimuli are perceived as vast when they are scales outside of people's usual frame of reference (Keltner and Haidt 2003). In previous awe literature, vastness is almost exclusively operationalized as physical vastness (e.g., grand vistas or towering trees; Piff et al. 2015). However, theory suggests that size is not the only dimension that can elicit feelings of vastness (Keltner and Haidt 2003). The current work is the first, to our knowledge, to examine how vastness elicited by temporal distortion can lead to the experience of awe. We test how both slow and fast motion can lead people to perceive time on a scale that there are not used to, which, in turn, leads to accommodation and increased experiences of awe. We test our predictions in five preregistered studies.

Taken together, our findings suggest that two very different videography techniques elicit awe for the same reason. Experiencing the passing of time in a stretched out (i.e., slow motion) or compressed (i.e., fast motion) manner inspires awe because it makes consumers realize that their own experience of time is limited, which makes them reconsider what they know about the world. Our work contributes to the literature on videography effects in marketing which has, thus far, exclusively focused on slow motion by examining fast motion. It also showcases the importance of awe for consumer research, thereby highlighting novel affective consequences of motion speed which has, thus far, been linked to mostly cognitive outcomes (e.g., intentionality and size inferences; Jia, Kim, and Ge 2020; Zin, Jia, and Zheng 2021).