

Time perspective with the emphasis on the behavioral characteristics

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Abstract: According to theory of time perspective, people perceive both inner and social world in five (some resources refer to six) zones. Time perspective could be described as a tendency to be biased toward one time zone and neglect the others. Those are / One can be biased toward past (positive and negative), present (hedonistic and fatalistic) or and future (future and transcendental future). This paper deals mainly with behavioural characteristics of each of them and describes time perspective related attributes in colloquial and broadly accepted way.

Key words: theory of time perspective, time zone, behavioural aspects of time perspective.

Introduction

In the late nineties of the twentieth century, Zimbardo conceptualized the theory of time perspective, which later became the mainstream researched topic of many social psychologists. Time perspective could be described as a tendency to be biased toward one time zone and neglect the others. It is usually referred to as glasses through which we interact with our everyday life. Although time perspective is broadly conceptualized phenomenon, it functions as the interaction of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspect that influence, and, in turn, are influenced, by social attributes. According to this theory, people perceive both inner and social world in five (some resources refer to six) zones. Thus, cognitive and emotional world of most of people is coloured by the way they perceive time. Moreover, not only cognition and emotion processes, but all behavioural aspects as uncover derivatives of formerly mentioned phenomena are influenced by specific time zone each individual holds (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008).

Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory

To measure up individual time perspective, Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory is used (Lukavká, Klicperová-Baker, Lukavský, & Zimbardo, 2011; Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). This questionnaire consists of fifty-six statements scored from 1 (absolutely agree) to 5 (absolutely disagree). Accordingly, time perspective is operationalized as inclination toward or disapproval of propositions that express mainly behavioural aspects of being biased toward time.

Time zones behavioural characteristics description

Which time zones have been postulated and what are their characteristics? Zimbardo keeps track with the traditional view of time as being divided into three areas. In addition, each of them consists of two sub-dimensions:

Past positive: is characterized by deep and true love toward family members and close friends. People who hold this time perspective are friendly, warm-hearted, and nostalgic. They uphold tradition, prefer the old good things to new ones, spend a lot of time watching movies and series from their youth, and, most of all, rather hesitate when it comes to the necessity to do things in different way (and do new things in general). Overall, people who declare this time perspective hold many health-related attributes, such as relaxing activities, calm mood and modesty. On the other hand, they do not move on when necessary.

Past negative: this time frame could be described as the opposite of the above mentioned time zone. People who hold it are rather hostile toward people and try forget the past all the time. They have good reason pertaining to negative moments and inappropriate family background they come from. Indeed, research shows that most of people with past negative view went through hard times in the past and most of them came about when growing up with family and caregivers.

Present hedonistic: imagine young boy dancing all the weekend nights, having no stable relationship, upholding statements like: „*world is here for us*“ or „*our corpse will die once, so why would we try?*“. Thus, they are not self-conscious at all, spending free time being surrounded by friends while not care about family. They wear on the trendy fashion, obsessively care about how they look, and constantly forget to fulfil arrangements and obligation they are binded to. Nevertheless, as they are uncommonly sociable and constantly make fun, other people seek them out and desire to spend a lot of time with them. Therefore, present hedonistic people are very favourite people and never run out of friends (although superficial ones).

Present fatalistic: attributes of people with this time perspective are similar to those of past negative. Hence, typical individual holding fatalistic view of the world disbelieves good results of any behaviour, at least his own. Fatalist does not care about anything and anybody and the truth is they does not look after themselves neither. They are a little bit similar to hedonists given illegal drugs and unprotected sex they practise from time to time. But there is one big difference. While hedonists simply want to enjoy and have fun every moment of their life, fatalists see things in dark shade and hold view that nothing, even the smallest attempt, will reverse what their destiny determined will once happen to them.

Future: those who declare to systematically set and pursue goals, are able to give in pleasurable moments in favour of fulfilling desired plans, actively construe their everyday reality and participate in many meaningful activities are called future oriented people. Individuals with high future orientation are very self-conscious and well aware of consequences of their current behaviour. Therefore, regular medical and dental check-ups, doing sport actively, and lifelong education as a means of self-actualization are indispensable part of their life.

Transcendental future: although this dimension is not a part of the questionnaire used to measure time perspective profile, this factor is supposed to bet the integral part of thinking as to people whose lives are closely interconnected to eastern religions (e.g., Buddhism and Hinduism; Boyd & Zimbardo, 1997). In this case, word *transcendental* means to be convinced that the way we behave on the earth and consequences of our actions till the death, have the major impact on the soul (that is, contrary to the corpse, immortal) and its development. Accordingly, people who insist this unusual (but not

incorrect) attitude well care about how they act toward the others and desire to perpetuate mental balance in their life (as many orthodoxical religion members usually do).

Although description provided here refers to time zones as being absolutely divided aspects, the fact is that each time factor overlap to the others and such attempt to differentiate them is rather fuzzy. Thus, people who start off doing research on time perspective would remember that every time zone specification is reductionism that serves as the way of easier understanding.

Conclusion

This article dealt with the theory of time perspective. Of greatest importance, we attempt to describe behavioural characteristics of each time zone. Moreover, we introduced questionnaire used to measure time perspective and mentioned reductionism inner to description provided here.

Zdroje:

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Introductory picture [online] was downloaded [2014-07-14] on the WWW:

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