

The Power of Favorite Music: How Music Influences the Perception of Time

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Music is one of the most impressive mediums influencing the experience of time. Thus, music is often used to shorten waiting time – consciously or unconsciously. In two experiments (n=156), we examined which characteristics of music are relevant to influence the experience of time. Prominent models of time perception – the Attentional Gate Model (Zakay & Block, 1997) and the Contextual Change Model (Block, 1989) – were used to deduce potential factors influencing time perception. The participants heard music of different genres, which varied in familiarity (Study 1) and likability (Study 2). Subsequently, participants judged the duration of the music pieces and how fast time was passing while listening to the music. Additionally, the participants evaluated certain characteristics of the music heard related to potential factors of time perception. The most important factor was, how much the music was liked, regardless whether the participant's attention was directed towards time (prospective time perception) or not (retrospective time perception). Other important factors were the arousal induced by the music and how much attention the music attracted. However, music familiarity had no impact on time perception. The results are discussed with respect to needed modifications of the existing models of human time perception.