

Journal Issue Review

Goodman, Paul S., Ancona, Deborah G., Lawrence, Barbara S., & Tushman, Michael L. (Eds.). (2001). Special topic forum on time and organizational research. *Academy of Management Review*, 26, 506-663.

Time as a topic of inquiry has recently emerged as a sphere of keen interest within the organization and management research community. For academics who have not yet given serious consideration to the temporal perspective in their research, this special issue of AOM serves as an excellent prologue to ultimately acknowledging the dimension of time and its immense significance.

The four editors have assembled a valuable collection of theoretical and empirical works by established and new authors. Their goal was to "advance our understanding of time in organization research" (p. 660). It quickly becomes clear when reading the material that the editors have succeeded. They have not only assembled a medley of others' work, but also provide 20 pages of their own perspective on the topic. The editors' opening introduction and closing article establish a call for researchers to adopt and use a temporal lens when examining organization phenomena.

The issue's first article, "Taking time to integrate temporal research" reflects on and integrates the growing body of research specific to time and timing. The underlying structures of existing research involving the time-related variable are classified into three categories: (a) conceptions of time, (b) mapping activities to time, and (c) actors relating to time. Authors Ancona, Okhuysen and Perlow often found variables spanning across the categories. Recognizing the relevance, they propose a framework that not only categorizes the variables, but also makes clear the interconnections among them.

To integrate the framework into existing research, the authors suggest following a five-step process: (a) identifying the variables, (b) placing them into appropriate categories, (c) examining similarities and differences, (d) examining the relationships within and across situations, then (e) explore. Next, seven prepositions suggesting directions for future research in the area of time and organization are presented.

The second article, "Building better theory: Time and specification of when things happen" recommends that when researchers investigate causality between a set of events, to make "correct" inferences, it is essential to acknowledge *when* events occur. Empirical studies involving causality were inventoried. It was found that very few papers addressed specifically the time element. "Impoverished theory" (p. 533) is not addressing the when, the how quickly events occur, or when change happens.

Authors, Mitchell and James acknowledge the quandary empirical researchers are in. They claim that including the dimension of time in studies' methods and measures, "raises issues" (p. 535). They advise that "we can and should do better" (p. 545). To assist empirical-study researchers in determining when to take measurements, two concepts are introduced. The *causal cycle* and the *moderation by causal cycle curve* (MCC curve) are explained and illustrated using simple yet thorough examples.

The article, "When the muse takes it all: A model for the experience of timelessness in organizations" proposes a model describing the period of time when "one surrenders to the depth and intensity of immediate experience" (p. 563) - often called *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). The author, Mainemelis constructs a theory that pertains to the individual experience of timelessness. He discusses the phenomena of its occurrence and its importance in the workplace - particularly how the experience affects quality and creativity. *Note: There is an article pertaining to the nonlinear dynamics of flow in Nonlinear Dynamics, Psychology, and Life Sciences (Guastello, Johnson & Rieke, 1999).*

Mainemelis' suggests that three factors (task, personnel and work environment) contribute to the likelihood of becoming engrossed, then experiencing timelessness. As the occurring frequency increases and the experience deepens there is increased likelihood of creativity arising. Twelve propositions are presented and explained related to *moments out of time*, which can lead to work quality, imagination, passion and creativity.

The next article, "When plans change: Examining how people evaluate timing changes in work organizations" is an interdisciplinary examination of individuals' temporal responsiveness - how people in organizations perceive time and evaluate time intervals. This perception can affect an individual's ability to adapt in the face of unanticipated events. Authors, Blount and Janicik, introduce the *Prevailing Temporal Agenda* and use the construct to introduce three lemmas to describe how an individual organizes activities and plans their time at work.

In addition, several propositions are presented that identify factors affecting how schedule changes are evaluated by individuals. These factors are then classified into 5 categories: (a) outcome effects, (b) experimental effects, (c) attributional effects, (d) perceiver effects, and (e) context effects. Blount and Janicik also make predictions about how timing changes will be evaluated by individual managers and the implications thereof.

The fifth article, "The effects of individual perceptions of deadline on team performance" illustrates how different perceptions of what "on-time" can mean among members of a work team. The article surfaces the different assumptions associated with time in team settings. The authors, Waller, Conte, Gibson and Carpenter develop a model and propositions describing how individual's perceptions of time deadlines affect their behavior, thus the ability of teams to meet work deadlines. They conjoin two questions central to the topic: (a) how do time urgency and time perspective influence individual deadline perceptions, and (b) how might individual differences within a team influence the teams ability to meet those deadlines.

The authors claim that past research on team behavior under deadline contains an implicit assumption that all team members perceive the given deadline similarly. They suggest that understanding these differences may "sharpen" existing knowledge and should be extended to future research.

Based on an Academy of Management *Best Doctoral Student Paper*, the next article, "Time, temporal capability, and planned change" proposes four ideal types of planned change processes. The assumptions of each are explored and the interaction among the types in large-scale change is identified. The student author, Huy, constructs seven propositions, each illustrated by empirical vignettes, relating to the various intervention processes. Huy makes a case for more effective sequencing and combinations of change type strategies.

In the last article, "The temporal dynamics of institutionalism," the relationship with time is examined from the perspective of pace - the rate by which an institution is diffused or entrenched - and its stability over time. The article looks at temporal dynamics and the impact of different mechanisms that support the development and maintenance of institutions. Four types of institutional mechanisms and their consequences are identified. The authors, Lawrence, Winn and Jennings, argue that each mechanism has distinct consequences for the stability and pace of institutionalization. The dynamics of different combinations of these mechanisms is discussed and recognized as creating complex patterns.

The closing article, a set of essays written by each of the issue's four editors, collectively calls for researchers to use the temporal lens "front and center" (p. 645) in their studies. In "Time: a new research lens" the obstacles to doing so are discussed, but the authors argue that the dimension of time is a powerful way to view organizational phenomena and provides richer research.

This special issue of Academy of Management Review provides a powerful introduction to the element of time in research; although, it was a disappointment to find no references to prior articles published in *Nonlinear Dynamics, Psychology, and Life Sciences* (NDPLS), or any other nonlinear-specific publications. While this collection of work serves as a welcome call to researchers to bring a temporal perspective to the forefront of their work, it neglects to mention the opportunity for leveraging the interdisciplinary work by others in the broader dynamics circle. A good example of doing this, specific to time and nonlinear dynamics, is Koehler's (1999) public policy article in NDPLS. Regardless, I would consider suggesting this issue *required reading* for all involved in organization research.

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