

Time Perception and Embodied Rejection

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The need to belong represents a central part of the human psyche, and may be thwarted by social exclusion and rejection. Observations of rejection have indicated a host of dramatically destructive consequences of ostracism, such as increased accounts of antisocial and self-defeating behaviour, negative emotionality and depression. Given the extensive emotional impact of social rejection, as well as the connection between embodied emotions and perceptions of time, it is reasonable to suspect that innate abilities to perceive time are also affected when one is rejected by their peer groups.

In the present study's innovative attempt to emulate embodied feelings of rejection, participants (N = 80) were randomly assigned to one of two emotional conditions – where they were either accepted or rejected by their peers, and also completed temporal bisection tasks – one before and one after the mood manipulation. Participants arrived in the experiment lab in groups of four and were informed that they would be working in pairs to complete the task, this was in fact deception and all participants completed the task individually. They were given a few minutes to familiarise themselves with each other and were then told to indicate the person they would most like to be paired with on a piece of paper. These papers were collected by the experimenter but were not used to group participants. Instead, the experimenter had already randomly assigned participants to either the rejected or accepted conditions. Participants were either told that no one had chosen them to work with (Rejected condition) or that they had been chosen by everyone and it would be better if they could work alone (Accepted condition). Additionally, mood experiences were assessed using the Brief Mood Introspective Scale (BMIS), which was administered to participants at the start and end of each session. Analysis of data showed that participants in

the Accepted condition judged stimulus durations to be significantly shorter. In contrast, Rejected participants judged stimulus durations to be significantly longer. Therefore the findings of this research would suggest that individuals experienced feelings of rejection for subjectively longer than their objective length. These findings may have important implications for the area of embodied emotion and perception as it highlights that the everyday emotions that we feel can have an impact on one of our most crucial senses, our sense of time's passage. Findings may also have implications in clinical treatments of negative emotions and depression.