



# Postgraduate Seminar Series

## Research Findings Seminar– Tick Tock: Two Essays on Employees’ Daily Temporal Experiences at Work

- **Date:** 27 April 2026
- **Time:** 9:30 –10:30
- **Venue:** SEK108
- **Presenter:** Ms. XU Qianqian, PhD Student of Management

**Abstract:** Although daily temporal experiences shape how employees think, feel, and act at work, little research has paid attention to this important topic. In this dissertation, I address this oversight by examining how employees’ daily temporal experiences influence themselves and how they may respond to coworkers’ time requests. Essay 1 focuses on employees themselves and examines how daily experienced worktime passage influences daily task performance. Research on subjective worktime passage has largely proceeded from a linear assumption that faster perceived worktime passage is associated with higher performance. I challenge this view by conceptualizing experienced worktime passage as a proximal temporal cue that activates self-regulatory processes. Integrating self-regulation and procrastination theory with subjective time research, I develop a curvilinear model of experienced worktime passage. I propose that when worktime is experienced as slow or fast, this deviation from employees’ habitual temporal baseline heightens temporal awareness and generates regulatory resources, thereby suppressing procrastination. By contrast, when worktime passes at a moderate pace as usual, temporal vigilance subsides and procrastination peaks. This results in an inverted U-shaped relationship between daily experienced worktime passage and work procrastination and thereby performance such that performance is lowest at moderate levels of experienced pace. I further propose that trait work self-efficacy moderates this curvilinear relationship. I tested these hypotheses using a mixed-method design: one laboratory experiment (Study 1, N = 227 undergraduates) and two experience-sampling studies (Studies 2 and 3, total daily N = 2,709 from 383 employees) among working adults (couriers and a heterogeneous workforce) and with different sources of data (self-reported, objective). Results across studies consistently support the theorizing: employees procrastinate most and perform worst on days when worktime passes at a moderate pace; the effect is more pronounced among employees lower in work self-efficacy. Essay 2 adopts an interpersonal perspective to explore how daily coworkers’ time requests shape employees’ work behaviors and outcomes. Prior research on coworkers’ requests largely focused on help-seeking but yielded mixed findings. I argue that focusing on time as a distinct resource embedded in such requests may clarify the mixed consequences, adding insights to research and practice on time requests. Given the commodity and social nature of time, coworkers’ time requests can be understood through two distinct lenses. Integrating scarcity theory and sociometer theory, I propose that, on one hand, daily worktime as an objective scarce resource requested by coworkers may heighten recipients’ sense of time scarcity and thus the tendency to preserve. In this sense, time requests by coworkers come at a cost of sacrificing one’s personal time (i.e., zero-sum time perception), which promotes more time use for self and undermines well-being and work goal progress. On the other hand, the sociometer accounts of time suggest that daily coworkers’ time requests signal recipients’ social and relational value credited by the coworkers, which develops perceived social worth. This increased social worth further motivates more time use for others and improves well-being and work goal progress. I further propose that chronic time poverty conditions the relative salience of these two interpretations. Results from an experience-sampling study across 10 consecutive workdays (N = 868 from 111 employees) largely support our predictions: daily coworker time requests reduced well-being and work goal progress through heightened zero-sum time perception, with this indirect effect stronger among employees high in chronic time poverty; by contrast, daily coworker time requests increased time use for others and improved well-being through perceived social worth only among employees low in chronic time poverty. Taken together, this dissertation advances research on time at work and offers a richer account of how temporal experiences make a significance at work.

**All are welcome**

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