Centennial Honors College

Western Illinois University

Undergraduate Research Day 2014

Poster Presentation

Gender Role Stereotypes as a Function of Vicarious Mortality

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According to Terror Management Theory (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1996), anxiety arises when people are reminded of death. In order to reduce this threat, people defend and embrace their cultural worldviews in an effort to enhance their self-esteem. Most studies in this literature involve reminding people of their own deaths (e.g., Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997), but few have manipulated death thought accessibility by prompting participants with death of another person. Thus, this was one purpose of the current study. Furthermore, I am interested in investigating adherence to masculine and feminine norms as a cultural worldview. I hypothesize that reminders of one's own death will result in greater acceptance of gender norms than reminders of others' deaths.

Participants will complete a study wherein they are first instructed to think of and write a narrative describing their own death, the death of a loved one, or the death of an acquaintance. This constitutes manipulation of the independent variable. They will then complete a survey consisting of the following measures, which will be used as dependent variables: The surveys are the Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory (CFNI-45) and the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI-46).

The data will be analyzed using one-way analyses of variance with mortality salience as the independent variable and masculine and feminine norm acceptance as the dependent variables. If my hypothesis is supported, the results will indicate masculine and feminine norm acceptance will be highest for participants reminded of their own death and lowest for those reminded of an acquaintance's death. Participants reminded of a loved one's death should score in the middle but significantly different from the other two experimental groups.