

Abstract

The present study contrasted predictions made by terror management theory (TMT) and socioemotional selectivity theory (SST). TMT predicted mortality salience would increase preference for a charismatic leader, found in a previous study among Americans. SST, in contrast, predicted perceived time limitation would increase preference for a relationship-oriented leader. 185 Hong Kong college students were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: mortality salient condition, time-limited condition, a time urgency condition and no-priming condition. After reading a campaign pamphlet of 3 political candidates, participants voted for a candidate. Results showed that perceived time limitation led to significantly higher votes for a charismatic leader and mortality salience led to significantly higher votes for a task-oriented leader. Implications of the findings are discussed.