

Review of: "Death needs, culture and emotional death proximity: Keys to intervene in social discrimination"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Dear Author,

Thank you for your paper on the fascinating topic of dying and dying culture. Although it is clear from the paper that you have immersed yourself in the topic and are passionate about it, this paper still comes across as a bit immature to me. Below I would like to offer some suggestions to make this paper stronger.

A first overall comment is the accessibility of the paper, especially the introduction. Since you would like to have a social impact with your work, it is important that the abstract and introduction are written in an accessible way. This way, one can quickly pick up and discern the basic ideas and concepts of the paper. To my sense, this is made difficult in this paper by the difficult language and rapid succession of concepts and hypotheses.

Perhaps the use of "death valance" is itself a difficult choice. Could you not speak of attitudes or perceptions regarding death? At the very least, you should interpret this concept in one approachable way earlier in the paper if you decide to make it further central.

In my opinion, your basic hypothesis is that the way we as humans view dying and the dying process differs between individuals and cultures. You then argue -rightly- that we could therefore influence the way we deal with death if we invested in it socially. This could especially influence negative attitudes (which have increased greatly in the industrialized West), such as fear around death, in a positive way. A number of values, like hope and dignity, seem to be central for many people, and talking about dying and making the topic central (such as through the use of certain educational materials) seems to create positive dynamics. In other words, we can work proactively, rather than re-actively.

A major flaw in this paper is the complete lack of a clear methodological section!

Please also clarify what makes this paper inventive - what do you add to existing research? (this is not entirely clear to me - other than some interesting hypotheses that are unfortunately insufficiently elaborated and substantiated)

I also find it strange that nowhere in your paper do you refer to the 'ars moriendi model', as well as to the phenomenon of medically assisted dying (euthanasia, assisted suicide), nor actually elaborate on the status of palliative care anywhere. This would certainly benefit this paper.

You state in your introduction that death denial affects phenomena such as racism, gender inclusiveness and ableism. In

doing so, you refer to several sources, but do not provide a basic structure of the underlying reasoning. I believe a brief outline around how one arrives at these propositions would benefit the paper. Especially since you restate this in your conclusions, I expect a clear structure to this argument.

You describe the Christian view of life after death as negative, referring to the concept of hell. This strikes me as a strongly unsubtle statement. Overall, Christianity has a positive, or at least a nuanced view of this (the coming of the Kingdom of God)-as do many religions, by the way (e.g., in Greek mythology). You could pay more attention to the diversified view of death and the life after it within religions, or limit your examples to those that unequivocally have a unified view of it.

"these movements follow the palliative approach of demonstrations after someone has died": I understand that you want to make a contrast between a proactive and a reactive approach. But I would rephrase this: you use the term "palliative" improperly and frame it particularly negatively - especially in the context of the theme of your own paper.

How do you support the relationship between capitalism and the lack of research on 'positive death valence'? Do I understand you correctly to argue that a positive attitude toward death and the dying process would have a negative impact on consumption? This seems like an interesting proposition, but little substantiated. May I also infer that you have done a (systematic) review of the prevalence literature?

Overall, you make a number of statements in this paper that are strongly recruiting/political. You may do this. But for a scientific paper, it is required that you do so in a reasoned and nuanced manner.

I wish you much success in reworking this paper!