



Stereotypes are *“a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, without always having proof or facts that this set idea really applies”*.

WHAT ARE STEREOTYPES?

This shows that stereotypes can be positive and negative. The fundamental problem is not stereotyping, since it helps us to navigate society and life but some stereotypes become a problem once we base our decisions solely on them and do not consider consequences.



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DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN STEREOTYPES

Explicit stereotypes

Implicit stereotypes

Definition

Stereotypes that are known among society and which individuals tend to admit and discuss

Stereotypes which unconsciously influence our behaviour and which we usually have no awareness of

Example

Mothers are better at nursing children than fathers

Mothers who work are looked at skeptically in society and at work

Possible consequence

Girls receive dolls as toys and do not receive complicated building blocks during a young age. Based on this early facilitation girls develop more competences and confidence similar to their toys.

Young mothers are often pushed towards staying at home instead of working, as they are deemed "bad mothers" if they go to work. They might also be discriminated and disadvantaged working in specific areas.



Discrimination and exclusion

Exclusion of young people among their peers, due to not conforming to the negative gender stereotypes portrayed in modern media

Self-stereotyping

Judging oneself based on stereotypes they and others believe in. This can result in loss of self-confidence for not fitting into the desired ideal despite the ideal not being realistic

Self-fulfilling stereotypes

When expecting an individual or a group to act a specific way (which they would usually not conform to) but due to this expectation they are led to behave a certain way, fitting the prevalent stereotype about them

Discrimination and violence

Becoming violent and showing discriminating behaviour when facing a group different to oneself and different cultures because of negative stereotypes turned to beliefs despite not being based on facts and the truth

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF STEREOTYPES?



Historical gender roles and expectations

Fear of the unknown and people who are different to oneself

Where do stereotypes come from?

Idealistic expectations, despite them being unrealistic

Prejudice

Why do we use stereotypes ?

- Navigating the world around us.
- Trying to fit in and finding your own place in society.
- Fear of being excluded from friends and family due to being different because someone is not conforming to known expectations (stereotypes)



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Common environment

Being in the same environment results in a shared stereotype due to experiencing the same situations, problems, and inputs. Therefore, the individuals start perceiving and reacting the same way and begin to share mutual stereotypes.

Socialization

Another option is the socialisation and upbringing of individuals. Some experts argue that children and adolescents are more likely to adopt stereotypes, compared to grown-ups. Children and adolescents are only starting to navigate around society to find themselves. They are searching for role models and are still building their identity.



Why do we share stereotypes



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Intergroup relations

This explanation suggests that stereotypes stem from social interactions among groups. These groups can be defined through a common similarity, e.g., age, cultural origin, skills, interests, etc. When such a group encounters a group of people different from them, certain mutual expectations are built. Example: if a group of adolescents (age 10-14) meets a group of elderly people (70-80), both will have expectations of how the other group will (re-)act to the situation. The elderly might expect the adolescents to be loud, even if they have never met the youngsters. Hence, the group members share common stereotypes due to their shared expectations of behaviour.

Peer pressure

This process argues that stereotypes are shared among a group of people due to the majority or the group leaders sharing the same opinions and influences. If the leader of a group or more than half of the group believe women should stay at home and care for their husbands, the other members will agree to this stereotype due to peer pressure, even if, originally, this is not their opinion. Additionally, not adapting to the common stereotypes might lead to exclusion or discrimination, forcing group members of different opinions to change their viewpoint.