

Cultural Stereotypes: Perception or Realty?

Juan Meraz

Assistant Vice President

Multicultural Services

Division for Diversity and Inclusion

What are Cultural Stereotypes?

Cultural Stereotype –
A general belief about
a group of people



Differs from prejudice in that it can have positive or negative connotations

Runs the risk of becoming prejudicial and leading to discrimination

How do We Measure Stereotypes?

Do we have to agree with a stereotype in order to be affected by it?

Stereotypes seem to be a function of automatic processing
Environment plays a role

Even automatic processes can be overcome with controlled processing



What are the Sources of Cultural Stereotyping?

What do you think of the "Compton Cookout?"



Compton Cookout

Called the "Compton Cookout," attendees were urged to dress and act in a manner that school officials say perpetuated racist stereotypes. An invitation on Facebook urged female participants to dress as "ghetto chicks" and said chicken, watermelon and malt liquor would be served at the party.

What are the Sources of Cultural Stereotyping?

“Beer Olympics” at Columbia College



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What are the Sources of Cultural Stereotyping?

Photos posted to Facebook, Instagram and other social media outlets from members of Kappa Alpha Theta show students at a “Beer Olympics” party dressing in racial stereotypes meant to represent Mexico, Japan, the Netherlands, Ireland, Jamaica and other Countries.

Social Learning

Many of our attitudes are formed in the home

Parents are an enormous source of information and influence.



Social Learning (continued)

Peers (colleagues, friends) also shape our attitudes

Authoritarian personality – favors obedience, avoids lower status people which is contributed to by our upbringing



Cognitive Sources

Dividing people into categories based on common attributes

Race, gender, other common features

Do you speak "loudly and slowly" to a Latino person without even thinking about it?

Are we instinctively drawn to categorizing based on differences?

In-group Favoritism

The "we/us versus they/them" mentality

Can lead to discriminatory behavior

The groups started with heavy in-group
Favoritism

Over time (with cooperation) this dissipated

Social dominance orientation – group should be
ordered according to worth



What are the Consequences of Cultural Stereotyping?

The dangers of cultural stereotyping are many:

Influences our perception of others

Affects our behaviors

Affects the behaviors of the stereotyped group



What are the Consequences of Cultural Stereotyping? (continued)

Self-fulfilling prophecy

“A belief that causes itself to be true”

Can lead to positive or negative behaviors

How might a student/employee perform who is told that she is "excellent?"

How might that same student/employee perform if she is told she is "average?"

We may inadvertently promote such outcomes based on how we interact with people

Stereotype Threat

The risk of confirming a negative stereotype about oneself

Similar to the self-fulfilling prophecy

When we are aware of stereotypes, we might live down to them



How can We Combat Cultural Stereotyping and Prejudice?

Contact Hypothesis

Increased communication between groups reduces prejudice/discrimination

Equal contact between the groups is also essential



Group Interdependence

Gordon Allport proposed 4 conditions to decrease prejudice

Equal status between groups

Institutional support for all groups

Intergroup cooperation

Common goals for all groups



Group Interdependence (continued)

Education

It is not enough to just talk about it

People have to participate in order to reduce stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination



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Questions?



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