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PSYCH 302

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Extra Credit: Literature Review 2-3 pgs

This semester one of the topics we discussed involving prejudice is stereotypes. This term is one that has a simple surface level, but has more depth behind it than most would realize. Prejudice has to do with attitude and feelings towards members of a group; while stereotyping has to d with more specific beliefs about a group/members. This too concepts can work together and often they do work together and have a negative effect on people, groups, and even society. Stereotypes play a role in our everyday lives and most of the time we don’t even realize it.

It is very obvious that stereotypes have negative effects and the prejudice behind them don’t help. These negative stereotypes also often put certain members into negative outgroups. The stereotypes I think the world expresses the most are usually connected to a certain race. Examples would be like saying white people are all fat or all Mexicans are lazy. There are a million other examples out there. The sad part about a lot of these negative stereotypes is the fact that it is often an initial reaction in the brain. People often don’t even think about it, they simply see a certain person and their brain stereotypes and puts them in a category. Anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) activation is the part of the brain that has this automatic response. This first step to overcoming these kinds of stereotypes that exist all over is to fully acknowledge the fact that they are real and they affect people and groups and how they live their life and the emotional tumoral many groups experience from the stereotypes being held over their heads.

There is another part to stereotypes to look besides just negative ones. There are also positive stereotypes that come out in the world. For example, men are strong, asians are smart, women can cook etc. At first glance these all can have some positive outlooks to them. These can have a few different effects though. A lot of these can have a negative affect behind them; for example men are strong can have the negative stereotype that women are weak behind it. Another affect these have can be pressure to follow or be like them. Saying all asians are smart could put pressure on all young asian students to have perfect grades. These positive stereotypes that exist in the world are often disguised as positive outlooks on groups/people, but often bring down other groups, put pressure on group members, or simply misrepresent who and what people really are.

There are many effects that stereotypes have on this world. They connect with prejudice to cause problems for society and the people living in it. There are negative and positive stereotypes in the world, but almost always lead to negative affects. One of the big topics psychologists have discussed is controlling stereotyping. Most of the type are brain automatically stereotypes a group or member from a group in a certain way. The question is can we control this? This is something psychologist style are looking into today. Personally I do not think we can control it completely. I think the initial reaction we have is often burned into our brains. Maybe with a lot of time and work we could change our brains to react differently, but it would be difficult I believe. I think for now, we must learn how to acknowledge this initial reaction,and learn to not react to, but acknowledge when this initial reaction is wrong. I think the world has a lot of work to put in before stereotypes are changed and erased, but with effort from everyone trying to change, hopefully one day this is a topic psychologist can forget was a problem people had to deal with.

Work Cited

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