

The Stereotype Threat Regarding Intelligence

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Introduction

“The consequences of the stereotypes are the contributors towards the educational and social inequalities of the various groups that might include the ethnic minorities in the academically based environments and the women regarding the mathematics. There are various adverse outcomes related to the fact, e.g., it might limit the domain of the students that they wish to pursue further, they might not value some specific areas of the study and could narrow the options of their career. These facts are related to intelligence somehow. So, one can say that stereotype has a direct impact on intelligence. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the research published and the different consequences of the stereotype threat regarding intelligence.”

Discussion

Most of the time, it happens that someone feels funny and smart while talking to one person, perhaps feeling hopeless, unintelligent and incoherent in the presence of someone else (Paul). It is not per the imagination; however, there are experiments that have shown that people feel comfortable when they are with a controversial partner and are judged by the observers that are being more amusing to them indeed (Paul). This is only just one example of the fact about the impact of social factors on intelligence (Paul). Being a student, teachers or parents when they get into the school year, this work makes them think that intelligence is not a “lump of something that’s in our heads” but “a transaction among people,” as suggested by Joshua Aronson, the psychologist (Paul). He is an associate professor at New York University and remained the leader in the investigation of the effects of social forces on academic performance (Paul). He, in collaboration with Claude Steele, identified the phenomenon of the “stereotype threat.”

“The study mentioned individual group members to be inferior academically. These members of the panel include Latino and African-American students, including the girls who are enrolled in the college in the courses of math and science (Paul). They scored much lower on the tests when continuously reminded of their race and gender (Paul). Furthermore, in 1990, the pair’s experiment, including dozens of studies from other researchers, concluded that the performance of the students that are having negative stereotype threats usually suffered because they were worried about confirming this stereotype in the group (Paul).”

“In 1995, in the article Journal Personality, the research professors Steele and Aronson said that black

students performed comparably with white students when they were told about the problem-solving task in the laboratory (Paul). However, the black students scored much lower when they were instructed about the test in such a way that this trial was meant to measure their intellectual ability (Paul). This happened so because the stereotype of the social evaluation has suppressed them regarding their intelligence.”

“Not just the minorities are susceptible to the threat of stereotype but all of us (Paul). When a group of people was examined on their intelligence that were notably confident about their ability of math and engineering and usually scored high did the wrong performance on the math portion of the SAT (Paul). It happened so when they were told that this experiment was to investigate “why Asians appear to outperform other students on tests of math ability (Paul).”

“In another study published in the early years in the Journal of Individual Differences and Learning, the students of high school did the worst performance on a test related to spatial skills when they were told that males perform better in solving space problems due to having the genetic difference between men and females (Paul). The women were found anxious about the confirmation of assumptions about their sex while the boys were found concerned about living up to it.”

Once the British psychologist namely Liam Hudson, wrote

“And this holds true where the comparison is much closer—between IQs of, say, 100 and 130. But the relation seems to break down when one is making comparisons between two people, both of whom have IQs that are relatively high. A mature scientist with an adult IQ of 130 is as likely to win a Nobel Prize as is one whose IQ is 180.” (Gladwell)

“Here, Hudson is trying to say that IQ is much like the height of basketball. If someone is five to six feet in height, does he have a realistic chance of playing basketball more professionally? Of course not. You need to be six feet tall to play along with other things equal (Gladwell). It could be better to be six two in comparison to the six one, and it’s better to be six three compared to six one. But after a certain point, the height doesn’t matter much. A player who is six to eight doesn’t make a better player than a player who is two inches shorter (Gladwell). So, a similar fact holds true for intelligence. The intelligence keeps the threshold.”

However, it is not just about academic records and playing the stereotype threat that is all around us, even depicted in our media (Wolska). One of the earliest significant studies that investigated gender stereotypes in advertisements includes the study of McArthur and Resko. They analyzed the adverts on American television (Wolska). A coding scheme was defined that is used to rate the central characters presented in the advertisements (Wolska). This coding is for the overall stereotyping of the gender consisting of “sex, the basis for credibility (as an expert or consumer), role (narrator or featured character), location (domestic or work settings), arguments for the product (factual or non-factual), rewards for using the product, consequences of not using the product and the type of product advertised (Wolska).” A similar method was found to replicate in over 50 subsequent studies that concerned the gender stereotypes in the advertisements and was found to be very objective and

reliable when compared with the obtained results.

“Studies have found the content analytic categories meaningful and bright enough to be used in different countries. Moreover, all studies have reported the satisfactory reliability of coding when more than one training coder has considered how to rate each of the advertisements.”

“ ‘Women tended to be used for advertising home and body products while services, technological and automotive products were primarily advertised by men’ (Wolska). One surprising finding was that of Tan, Ling, and Cheng as Singaporean advertisements favored women for phone and computer commercials in comparison while its Southeast Asian neighbor, Malaysia, used men in most of the telecommunications business.”

Conclusion

“If the threat of social exclusion can decrease the expression of intelligence, so can a perceived threat to physical safety. It’s common to blame disadvantaged children’s poor academic performance on their environment. By this, we usually mean longstanding characteristics of their homes and neighborhoods (Paul). But research on the social aspects of intelligence suggests that much more immediate aspects of kids’ surroundings can also affect their I.Q.’s.”

“The evolving literature on stereotype threat shows that performance is always social in nature (Paul). Even alone in an exam room, we hear a chorus of voices appraising, evaluating, and passing judgment. And as social creatures, humans are strongly affected by what these voices say.”

“This research has important implications for the way we educate our children. For one thing, we should replace high-stakes, one-shot tests with unobtrusive and ongoing assessments that give teachers and parents a more accurate sense of children’s actual abilities (Paul). We should also put in place techniques for reducing anxiety and building self-confidence that take advantage of our social natures. And we should ensure that the social climate at our children’s schools is one of warmth and trust, not competition and exclusion.”

“Not only is intelligence not fixed, but neither are any number of abilities that we may think we either have or don’t have, be they as straightforward-seeming as math skills or as complex as musicality. The main aim of mass media is to be universal and suitable for everyone, to gather the largest possible audience (Paul). Thus, television, responsible for providing the central social discourse, is supposed to be a mirror of society (Paul). However, because of a stereotypical way of explaining reality, some groups are underrepresented or ignored, and therefore, the community image is incomplete. For instance, the way in which male and female roles are presented in commercials reflects the traditional notions of gender, where women are dominated by men (Paul). Although people are aware of the dangers posed by generalization, they tend to be conformists and would rather submit to the dominant patterns than oppose them and risk a negative reception of such behavior from others.”

Work Cited

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