How do stereotypes form?

Do people ever stereotype you?

Write down your own ideas about how stereotypes are formed.

Using p108-110 of Course Companion

What are stereotypes? Provide a definition.

A stereotype is a social perception of an individual based on group membership or physical attributes. It is a generalization that is made about a group and attributed to all group members. It can be positive or negative.

OR

Stereotypes are simplified mental images which act as templates to help interpret the social world. Lipmann

How do stereotypes affect behavior?

Steele and Aronson (1995) Stereotype threat

Outline the study below in terms of aims, methods, findings and conclusion.

*Stereotype threat* occurs when one is in a situation where there is a threat of being judged or treated stereotypically.

Aim: Can you inadvertently confirm the stereotype held against you when performing a task under stereotype threat?

Method: Gave participants a 30 min verbal multiple choice test.

One group told *it is a laboratory task to study how certain problems are solved.* The other group was told *it is a genuine test of their verbal abilities*.

Results: African Americans performed lower compared to European Americans when told it was a genuine test of verbal abilities. However when told it was a lab expt the results for each group was the same.

Conclusion: If stereotypes are believed they can lower the performance of a group.

Spencer et al (1977) Stereotype threat

Outline the study below in terms of aims, methods, findings and conclusion.

Aim: Does stereotype threat lead to intellectual under performance?

Method: A difficult Maths test was given to men and women who were good at Maths.

Findings: Women who were equally well qualified as men, significantly underperformed compared to them in Maths tasks. They performed equally well in literature skills.

Conclusion: *Spotlight anxiety* causes emotional distress that undermines performance. Women are stereotype threatened in Maths and therefore under-perform. There is no stereotype for literature and they do equally well. This threat can limit educational prospects.

How do stereotypes form?

1. Explain stereotyping through sociocultural learning. This could be through personal experience or through a ‘gatekeeper’.

Campbell (1967) We form stereotypes based on personal experience. However, in the absence of this we rely on ‘**gatekeepers**’ (media, parents or other members of our culture).

1. Explain stereotyping through social categorization and generalizations. Include the term illusory correlation.

Cultural and social factors influence us (in-group/out-group) which leads to social categorizations.

Hamilton and Gifford stated that stereotypes are due to an illusory correlation. People form false associations between membership of a social group and specific behaviours. “Women are bad drivers”. This is a type of cognitive bias.

1. Explain stereotyping through schema processing and confirmation bias.

Once stereotypes are formed they act as cognitive schemas.

We tend to rely on previously held schemas to guide our interpretation of stimuli around us. People may tend to seek out and remember information that supports the schema.

Similarly, once an illusory correlation is made, people will remember information that supports this. For example remembering seeing a women driver failing to park. This is an example of **confirmation bias.** People pay attention to behaviours that confirm what they believe about a group and tend to overlook information that contradicts what they already believe. This makes stereotypes resistant to change.

Snyder & Swann (1978)

Conducted a study in which they told female college students that they would meet a person who was either introverted or extroverted. They were then asked to prepare a set of questions for the person they were going to meet. In general, participants came up with questions that confirmed their perceptions of introverts and extroverts. Those who thought they were meeting introverts asked questions like ‘what do you dislike about parties’? or ‘Are there times when you wish you could be more outgoing?’ The extroverts were asked questions like ‘What do you do to liven up parties’? The researchers concluded that this confirmed that people have pre-conception about people’s personalities.

The Princeton trilogy

Study 1 Katz and Braley (1933)

* Do traditional social stereotypes have a cultural bias?
* 100 male Princeton students chose 5 traits from a list of 84 words to characterize different ethnic groups.
* There was a lot of agreement, particularly for negative traits. 84% said Negroes were superstitious. 79% said Jews were shrewd. They were very positive about their own group (in-group)
* Most students had no contact with members of the ethnic so stereotypes were learned through the media or from gatekeepers.

Study 2 Gilbert (1951)

* Repeat of previous study. There was still in-group bias but less agreement about negative traits.
* Japanese stereotypes were very negative-due to negative press about Japan after Pearl Harbour.
* Many students did not like being asked to make such generalizations, which indicates social change.
* Stereotypes can be shared by large sociocultural groups as social representations/categorizations.

Study 3 Karlins et al (1969)

* Repeat of previous study.
* Many students objected to the task but this time there was greater agreement on the stereotypes assigned compared to 1951.
* Social stereotyping re-emerged but they were now more positive.

Devine (1989)

She argued that it is important to distinguish between knowledge of a stereotype and accepting it. The Princeton trilogy does not take this into account.

How is the process of stereotyping similar to social identity theory? Social categorization

Note: that this relates to a learning outcome from the cognitive perspective:

* Discuss how social or cultural factors affect one cognitive process

You could talk about how social categorizations (which are influenced by cultural factors) result in stereotyping. Once stereotypes are formed they act as cognitive schemas.

What possible SAQ’s could be asked related to this learning outcome?

*Explain the formation of stereotypes and their effect on behavior.*

How would you structure an ERQ/Essay/22 marks?

*Discuss the formation of stereotypes and their effect on behavior*

Why is research in stereotyping hard to carry out?