Stereotype: A Serious Problem in the World

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Abstract: Stereotype is a common thing that exist everywhere in our life although it has many bad influences. However, this phenomenon happens every day when people communicate or get information from TV. Sometimes the stereotypes can be formed easily if you are not familiar with those groups of people.

Keywords: Stereotype, religious cultures, college students, media

1. Introduction

Stereotype is a common thing that exist everywhere in our life. I always be asked a question by people from other countries: do people in your country know kung Fu? This is a typical example of stereotyping. After watching several Chinese movies, it seems that Chinese people can master kung fu. Stereotypes are caused by the lack of relevant courses, media reports, and people's inability to truly understand other culture. The consequences of stereotyping are xenophobia and bullying and increasing ignorance and misrepresentation, which means that stereotyping is not just a social phenomenon but a social problem. In order to solve the problem of stereotype, for school, colleges should invite famous teachers to give lectures, encourage students to learn other religious cultures; For students, we can set up an organization to carry out some activities that are conducive to eliminating stereotypes.

2. Reasons

One reason why stereotype appears is that schools do not offer enough courses about religion, race or gender. The fact is that many schools including high schools as well as universities do not pay attention to the education in this aspect. They still give priority to the professional courses. As a result, students may have wrong stereotypes, especially those who do not have too many opportunities to get in touch with knowledge of religion, race or gender.

Another factor that affect the appearance of stereotype is the media. The information presented by media plays an important role in influencing the thoughts of the audience. So, if the media is stereotype-oriented, it will be fewer possibilities to make change of the phenomenon. As we all know, the media is very common in our daily life, we watch TV or news almost every day, and many of us quite believe the information they get from the media is correct, but have you ever thought that the media will also distort the truth. For instance, the number of reported cases made by African-American people is more than the number of cases made by white people. Otherwise, even the male-female ratio in media company shows there exists a stereotype. An author called Julia T. Wood discussed it in her article, "Whether it is prime-time television, in which there are three times as many white men as women (Basow, 1992 p. 159), or children's program-ming, in which males outnumber females by two to one, or newscasts, in which women make up 16% of newscasters and in which stories about men are included 10 times more often than ones about women ("Study Reports Sex Bias," 1989)." This disparity in the ratio of men to women may creates the stereotype that women are less able to work than men.

It cannot be denied that due to the limitations of cross-cultural communication, people cannot really understand other cultures. Even the cultures of their own countries may not be able to be fully understood by them. This has led to the impression of that country or that culture will be based on word-of-mouth description. However, people's insights are undoubtedly limited, and it will come to misunderstandings and even prejudice in the end.

3. Effects

There are couple effects of stereotype. Firstly, if a company act based on their incomplete knowledge

or even the stereotype without doing deep research, it will cause misrepresentation. There are so many countries in the world, and the culture of each country is different. Because of that, it is easy to generate stereotype of other countries if we do not understand that country's culture well and it may lead to some misrepresentation and discriminary incidents in the end. For instance, in mid-November of 2018, Dolce & Gabbana, an Italian luxury fashion brand, launched three short videos on the Chinese social media network Weibo. In the three videos, Dolce & Gabbana asked the model to eat traditional Italian food with chopsticks using a weird way and it caused the model looks really stupid. When the Asians saw these videos, they felt that their culture of chopsticks is not properly respected by this brand and felt being discriminated. As a result, Dolce & Gabbana had to pay their fiddler and the market of this brand in Asia shrunk. Furthermore, ignorance is another performance of having a stereotype and it will influence people's action. A group of people may be discriminated although they do nothing wrong. Michelle McDonald believes that a person may feel hatred or fear towards a stranger or a foreigner for lack of accurate information about another culture. For example, people may be afraid of or hate the Muslim family being their neighbor, because they do not know the Muslim religion, and they saw some negative news about Muslims on TV. Their ignorance leads them to blindly create ad stereotypes about people of other religions because of several negative reports. In a word, stereotypes lead to misrepresentation and ignorance.

Along with misrepresentation and ignorance, stereotype is always accompanied by exclusivity and bullying. When we have bad stereotypes about other people because we do not know about other religions, exclusivity and bullying tend to happen, especially in university. "According to the U.S. Department of Justice's Hate Crime Victimization report, the percentage of hate crimes that were motivated by religious bias was nearly three times higher in 2012 (28%) than in 2004 (10%)." The number of crimes caused by other religions is increasing day by day, and Jackson argues that a fifth of those who committed these crimes were students. Some students may unconditionally dislike or even isolate students who do not share their belief. Furthermore, Dr. Ebony O. McGee interviewed black and Asian students and wrote a report, "McGee found that Black students were stereotyped as being "intellectually inferior" to their peers." Not only do black students have labels but Asian students have labels, these black and Asian students are stressed by stereotypes.

4. Solutions

In order to solve the problem of stereotype, universities should take actions. Firstly, it is a good choice to invite some famous professors or celebrities to deliver lectures with the goal of eliminating prejudice is also an advised idea. The frequency could be one time one month. Schools can entice students to attend lectures by giving them extra credit for participating. It is also available for the school to organize students to attend a presentation of similar topic in other school. Generally, participating the presentation or the lecture is more interesting than taking a professional class, so that it is more acceptable for people to join in this kind of activities.

Secondly, opening courses related to stereotype like religious culture learning as well as language learning is another thing that university can do. Encouraging students to study religious cultures can help students to know and respect other cultures. There are five majors religious in the world. Sudip Mazumdar states, "As per statistics, around 59% of the world population believe in religions, while the rest are non-religious or atheists." Religious people are still the majority in the world. These people cannot all believe in the same religion, so they believe in different religions and have different beliefs. However, students often do not want to learn about other religious culture for some reasons, such as seeing some negative news about other religions, no feeling that it is not necessary for them to learn about other religious cultures. In this case, it is necessary for college to encourage students to put their attitude in the right direction to learn about religious cultures. For instance, our school has a course named JRN 380, which is about racial discrimination. The school can offer more such courses to encourage students to learn. Encourage students to know and learn other religious cultures that are different from their own, and they will naturally understand and respect other religious cultures. In a world, it is necessary to encourage students to study religious cultures.

Finally, school can also offer language courses which taught by foreign teachers. as for language learning, students will not only learn the alphabet, the meaning, the grammar rules and the arrangement of words, but also learn the behavior of the society and its cultural customs. A particular language points to the culture of a particular social group. "A person's language represents such a strong foundation to a person's identity that the Vermont Agency of Education calls language the "most overt expression of culture." Learning a foreign language can not only provide students with a language skill, but also cultural

awareness. Each language has its own unique culture background. Bill Zart argues that When we learn a language deeply, it is difficult to avoid knowing the culture behind the language. When we study the language, we will constantly learn its culture and history. For example, China has proverb, American has the slang, if we do not know anything about the culture of the two countries, we cannot understand the meaning of proverb and slang from literal meaning. Then we will go to find the story behind these sentences, naturally we understand the culture of the country more and more by learning the language. In sum, college invites celebrity speakers and offers classes which are about religion and race can help students eliminate stereotype.

People may doubt that it costs too much to hire professors and open more elective courses. Some of them even think it is a waste of school source. There is another way that save money: letting students figure out the problems they have.

Establishing a student organization can be considered as another alternative solution, an organization related to stereotype elimination can help students understand the current state of stereotype problem. After realizing the consequence of having improper prejudice in the university, the possibility that they discriminate other people in the future will decrease. There are many things the student organization can do, for example, they can hold group meetings weekly. During the meeting, students can introduce the cultures and customs of their countries or regions, their religions and the historical anecdotes of their country. Moreover, they can also communicate with each other about easily misunderstood things in each other's culture. Students who are interested in various cultures can participate in the meeting to communicate and discuss with others; The students can come from different countries or have different skin colors. This method allows students to learn different cultures through chatting and can be one of the efficient ways to eliminate stereotypes. Organizing such a meaningful meeting costs nothing, however, students can benefit a lot from it. Otherwise, take me for example, I always receive lots of questionnaires through e-mail. The student organization can do the same thing that they can send questionnaire to all the university students. It can only attract their attention to the problems of stereotype but also collect the data about how they think of this phenomenon. The data can be analyzed and be offered to larger organizations or experts who have relevant major so that they can do deeper research to solve the problems in professional way. Also, the student organization can play movies which have educational meaning on the movie night. There are many movies that expose society's many bad phenomena about discrimination such as "Crush", "Green Book", "Color" etc. It is worth mentioning that the atmosphere of movie night is relaxing so that students can learn from movie pleasantly, and they can make new friends at the same time. But the problem is that the power of a student organization is not strong enough to eliminate the stereotype. The property of student organization limits the scale of events. It means the power of the organization is circumscribed hence I recommend that the university should also think highly of this problem and take actions to solve it.

5. Conclusion

Compare the solutions that college can provide and students' own solutions, the solution of give lectures, adding language and encouraging students to study religious cultures should be effective to solve the problem that we tend to stereotype people from other country, because it is easy for students to get interesting in languages and religious culture of other countries, and the college can give them more choices. Although the solution of setting up a student organization is also good, it is too limited, and there should not be a lot spontaneous participation.

In sum, as the college does not offer enough courses which is about religion, race or gender and the media distorts the truth, many students do not have much knowledge of other countries' cultures and easy to stereotype people, which lead to the occurrence of xenophobia and bullying, and misrepresent and ignorance. Eliminate stereotype can reduce exclusivity and bullying in college, and it can make people not to believe the false reports and learn more knowledge. The solutions of eliminate stereotype are Universities can give some lecture, offer more language classes and encourage student learn other religious cultures. Students can set up own organization to hold some activity which can help eliminate stereotype. I hope college students can know the importance of eliminate stereotype through this paper, and why don't you find some good movies which about religion and race, or take some classes which about other cultures?

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