

Do You Know My Real Thoughts about You? The Relationships between Age-Based Stereotypes, Meta-Stereotypes, and Intergenerational Anxiety and Contact

Introduction

- Stereotypes
 - Older people are perceived more negatively than younger people [1].
 - Positive stereotypes are associated with more intergenerational contact [2].
 - The relationship between older people's stereotypes toward younger people and intergenerational contact remains unclear.
- Meta-Stereotypes
 - Definition: beliefs about how other groups think about own group [3].
 - Both younger and older people tended to have more negative meta-stereotypes than the actual stereotypes perceived by the other age group [3].
 - Negative meta-stereotypes are associated with lower quality in anticipated intergenerational contact, larger perceived distance and more avoidance [4, 5].
- Intergenerational Anxiety
 - Less intergenerational anxiety is associated with more intergenerational contact [6].
- Intergenerational Contact
 - The relationships between age-based stereotypes, meta-stereotypes, intergenerational anxiety and contact remain unclear.

Hypotheses

- H1: Younger people's stereotypes toward older people are more negative than older people's stereotypes toward younger people.
- H2a: Older people's meta-stereotypes will be more negative than younger people's actual stereotypes about them.
- H2b: Younger people's meta-stereotypes will be more negative than older people's actual stereotypes about them.
- Explore the relationships between stereotypes, meta-stereotypes, intergenerational anxiety, and the frequency of intergenerational contact.

Method

- 39 older people (65-83 years old, $M = 71.21$, $SD = 4.67$, male = 17, female = 22)
 - 38 White; 36 living with people aged 65+ years, 3 living with people aged 18-30 years
- 40 younger people (17-27 years old, $M = 20.25$, $SD = 2.38$, male = 6, female = 34)
 - 29 White; all living with people aged 18-30 years
- Self-reported Questionnaire:
 1. Demographic
 2. Aged-Based Stereotypes and Meta-Stereotypes: Open-ended questions & Ageing Semantic Differential (ASD) Scale
 3. Anxiety scale
 4. Frequency of Intergenerational Contact ("How many times a week do you have contact with any people at the age of 18-30 years or 65 years or above?")

Results: Stereotypes and Meta-Stereotypes assessed by Open-ended Questions

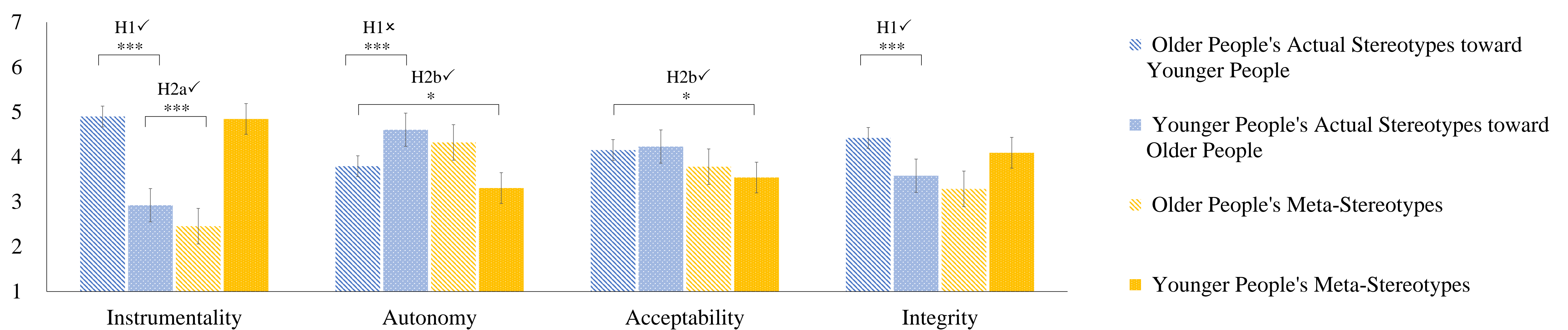
Table 1.
Positive Stereotypes and Meta-Stereotypes

	Describing Younger People		Describing Older People	
	Older People's Stereotypes	Younger People's Meta-Stereotypes	Younger People's Stereotypes	Older People's Meta-Stereotypes
Hopeful/Striving	19%	14%	Friendly	38%
Smart/Tech Savvy	16%		Knowledgeable	33%
Caring	14%		Independent	14%
Energetic	11%		Family-oriented	6%
Liberal	9%		At ease	14%
Exploring	9%		Resilient	7%
Carefree	8%			
Healthy	8%	10%		
Independent	5%			
Knowledgeable		20%		
Open-minded		13%		
Friendly		12%		
Positive		11%		
At ease		6%		
Hardworking		6%		

Table 2.
Negative Stereotypes and Meta-Stereotypes

	Describing Younger People		Describing Older People	
	Older People's Stereotypes	Younger People's Meta-Stereotypes	Younger People's Stereotypes	Older People's Meta-Stereotypes
Rude	28%	20%	Less open-minded	24%
Naïve	18%	6%	Judgemental	17%
Lazy/Unmotivated	12%	13%	Moody	14%
Egocentric	11%	3%	Weak	12%
Financially illiterate	9%		Unfriendly	8%
Technology dependent	9%	6%	Out of touch	8%
Inappropriate drug/alcohol use	5%		Egocentric	6%
Undisciplined		14%	Complaining	4%
Dependent		11%	Anti-social	35%
Weak		8%	Social burden	8%
Too sensitive		4%	Tech illiterate	6%

Results: Stereotypes and Meta-Stereotypes assessed by the Ageing Semantic Differential Scale



Results: Relationships between Stereotypes, Meta-Stereotypes, Intergenerational Anxiety, and Frequency of Intergenerational Contact

Table 3.
Correlation between Older People's Stereotypes, Meta-Stereotypes, Intergenerational Anxiety, and the Frequency of Contact with Younger People on a weekly basis.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Contact_Younger	-									
2. Intergenerational anxiety	-.16	-								
3. Intragenerational anxiety	.07	.17	-							
4. S_Instrumentality	-.02	-.09	-.07	-						
5. S_Autonomy	-.19	.08	-.07	.49**	-					
6. S_Acceptability	-.004	-.34*	-.18	.55***	.21	-				
7. S_Integrity	-.116	-.04	-.002	.68***	.69***	.33*	-			
8. MS_Instrumentality	-.08	-.47**	.03	-.14	.01	.26	-.10	-		
9. MS_Autonomy	.05	-.15	.004	-.15	-.28	.15	-.02	.47**	-	
10. MS_Acceptability	-.22	-.41*	-.002	.22	.15	.27	.25	.63***	.27	-
11. MS_Integrity	.11	-.24	.08	.03	-.10	.42**	-.04	.65***	.61***	.55***

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. S = Stereotypes, MS = Meta-Stereotypes

Table 4.
Correlation between Younger People's Stereotypes, Meta-Stereotypes, Intergenerational Anxiety, and the Frequency of Contact with Older People on a weekly basis.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Contact_Older	-									
2. Intergenerational anxiety	.03	-								
3. Intragenerational anxiety	.09	-.20	-							
4. S_Instrumentality	-.03	-.17	.01	-						
5. S_Autonomy	-.17	-.14	-.02	.18	-					
6. S_Acceptability	-.09	-.46**	.001	.33*	.26	-				
7. S_Integrity	-.23	-.01	.26	.49**	.27	.31*	-			
8. MS_Instrumentality	.03	-.34*	.10	.02	-.02	.44**	.01	-		
9. MS_Autonomy	-.13	-.34*	-.13	.21	-.20	.37*	-.07	.46**	-	
10. MS_Acceptability	.04	-.34*	.01	.42**	.17	.45**	.24	.51***	.42**	-
11. MS_Integrity	-.01	-.39*	.02	-.09	-.02	.30	-.25	.69***	.38*	.53***

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. S = Stereotypes, MS = Meta-Stereotypes

Discussion

- Qualitative differences between stereotypes and meta-stereotypes were found in both age groups.
- H1 was supported in the domains of *instrumentality* ($p < .001$) and *integrity* ($p < .001$).
- H2a was supported in the domain of *instrumentality* ($p = .014$).
- H2b was supported in the domain *autonomy* ($p = .041$) and *acceptability* ($p = .006$).
- Intergenerational anxiety was associated with specific stereotypes and meta-stereotypes

Limitations and Future Study

- No differentiation of different types of intergenerational contact
 - non-family members
- The quality of intergenerational contact was not measured
- The ASD scale may not capture all the stereotypes and meta-stereotypes
 - ...The answers in the open-ended questions did not match the dimensions in the ASD scale

Reference

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