Social Perception and Stigma: Creating an Inclusive and Equal Society

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ABSTRACT

Misperceptions of certain groups, such as minority groups or people with disabilities, often form stigmas that lead to discrimination and marginalization. This social stigma not only impacts the stigmatized individuals but also affects their social and psychological well-being and creates inequalities in society. This research examines how social misperceptions contribute to the formation of stigma and its impact on individuals and social stability. A comprehensive approach is needed to reduce stigma, including awareness raising through education, promotion of empathy, inter-group interaction, as well as affirmative policies that support social inclusion. The media also has an important role to play in changing public perceptions by portraying more positive and accurate representations of stigmatized groups. In addition, an inclusive education system has the potential to reduce discrimination by creating spaces to understand and accept differences. The research also highlights the importance of periodic evaluation of implemented policies and interventions to ensure the sustainability of social change. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that these efforts continue to be strengthened by involving all levels of society to create a more inclusive and equitable environment.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of social stigma against certain groups, such as minority groups or people with disabilities, has become a significant problem in many societies. Social perceptions, or the way individuals and groups see and judge others, play an important role in the formation of these stigmas. These perceptions are often based on developed stereotypes, leading to the formation of negative or inaccurate images of certain groups. Such stigma can lead to marginalization and discrimination against those in these groups, reducing their opportunities to participate fully in social and economic life. In this era of social media and globalization, negative perceptions of certain groups can be quickly spread and reinforced, making matters worse for those who are already stigmatized (Hunting et al., 2015).

In particular, minority groups and people with disabilities are often the main targets of social stigma. Social perceptions of these groups can be based on ignorance or influenced by the media and prevailing social norms (Pickett & Cunningham, 2017). Many societies tend to judge people based on characteristics that are perceived to be different

from dominant social norms, without considering deeper social or individual perspectives. This process creates a divide between majority and minority groups, which further exacerbates inequality and social exclusion. Therefore, it is important to analyze how social perceptions play a role in the formation of stigma, as well as its impact on stigmatized individuals and groups (Dickins et al., 2016).

Social stigma, which is formed from negative perceptions about certain groups, often stems from stereotypes developed in society. These stereotypes create misperceptions and stigmatize individuals from these groups, reducing their chances of being accepted and valued in various aspects of life, whether in employment, education or social interactions (Williams & Fredrick, 2015). Minority groups, for example, are often labeled with negative labels related to race, religion, or sexual orientation, which exacerbates existing social inequalities. As expressed by Goffman (1963), stigma often serves to define groups as "other" who are considered inferior or unworthy, which can exacerbate discrimination and social exclusion.

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The stigma experienced by people with disabilities is also often triggered by false or incomplete social perceptions of their abilities and potential (Craig & Richeson, 2016). Society often sees people with disabilities through the lens of weakness or inability, leading to restrictions on their opportunities to participate in social, economic and cultural activities. This stigma can be compounded by limited and often stereotypical representations in the media, which portray people with disabilities as objects of pity or as people who should be given special attention, rather than individuals who have the capacity to contribute to society. Research by Campbell (2009) shows that social stigma against people with disabilities is largely rooted in ignorance and lack of understanding of their diverse experiences and needs.

This phenomenon of social stigma becomes an individual issue, and is linked to broader social structures, which shape how such perceptions develop and are maintained (Anazodo et al., 2019). Societies tend to adopt dominant views of certain groups that are more often shown in the media or considered cultural norms. This leads to discrimination that is systemic and not just individualized. For example, certain groups that are considered "different" in terms of culture, sexual orientation, or even physical appearance are often faced with social barriers that are difficult to overcome, as the stigma is maintained by existing social and cultural structures. According to Link and Phelan (2001), social stigma affects individuals in stigmatized groups, and hinders overall social development by creating deep and sustained inequalities.

It is important to observe the phenomenon of social stigma formed from perceptions of certain groups, as its impact can undermine social order and exacerbate existing inequalities in society. When individuals from minority groups or people with disabilities are stigmatized, they not only face challenges in their personal and professional lives, but also face restrictions in access to equal opportunities, such as education, employment and healthcare. These social stigmas exacerbate marginalization and exclusion, further hindering the process of social inclusion that is critical to the development of a just and equal society. Therefore, understanding the process of stigma formation is crucial for designing effective policies to create a more inclusive society and strengthen relationships between individuals from different backgrounds.

The phenomenon of social stigma rooted in misperceptions needs to be observed as it has the potential to worsen the mental and physical health of stigmatized individuals. Research shows that stigmatized individuals tend to experience higher levels of stress, depression and anxiety due to the social exclusion and discrimination they experience. This can significantly reduce their quality of life. With increased awareness of the negative impact of social stigma, we can encourage changes in the way society views stigmatized groups and create more supportive, healthy and inclusive environments. These observations provide an important basis for social interventions and education to reduce social inequalities and create spaces where diversity is valued.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how social perceptions of certain groups, such as minority groups or people with disabilities, can shape stigma in society. The research aims to understand the process by which social stigma is formed and how negative perceptions of these groups influence the views of society at large. Furthermore, this research aims to identify the impact of social stigma on the well-being of stigmatized individuals as well as overall social stability. It will explore how discrimination arising from stigma can affect the social, psychological and economic lives of stigmatized individuals.

Finally, the research also aims to find ways to correct social misperceptions of stigmatized groups, in order to reduce the negative impact of stigma and create a more inclusive and equal society. The research will look for approaches that can be applied to improve people's understanding of diversity and reduce harmful stereotypes.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a literature study approach, which allows researchers to analyze various relevant articles, books and journals to understand social perceptions and their impact on stigma. This literature study aims to identify key concepts related to the formation of social stigma and how negative perceptions of certain groups are formed and disseminated in society. Through this approach, the researcher will explore literature that addresses stereotypes, discrimination, and social factors that influence society's views of minority groups and people with disabilities (Crocker et al., 1998).

Furthermore, this research will review previous studies that address the impact of social stigma on individual well-being and social relationships. We will explore studies that show how social stigma can affect mental health, feelings of isolation, and social and economic opportunities for stigmatized individuals. For example, a study conducted by

Major and O'Brien (2005) showed that stigma can cause ongoing psychological stress and limit individuals' participation in various social and professional activities. By using this approach, the researcher can gather a range of views and relevant findings to illustrate the long-term impact of stigma.

Finally, this research will explore the literature relating to efforts to correct social misperceptions and reduce stigma. Focus will be given to approaches that can promote social inclusion and reduce harmful stereotypes. One effective way to reduce prejudice is to create positive intergroup interactions and mutual understanding. Through this literature review, we will synthesize approaches that have proven successful in reducing stigma, and provide insights for more inclusive social policy-making.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Social stigma is the process by which individuals or groups are perceived as different and, as a result, experience negative judgment from society. The concept of stigma was first introduced by Erving Goffman in his book "Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity" (Goffman, 1963). Goffman explained that stigma can arise from various sources, including physical characteristics, behaviors, or social conditions that are considered incompatible with societal norms.

Social stigma can have a significant impact on stigmatized individuals. One of the main impacts is on mental health. Research shows that individuals who experience stigma often experience higher levels of anxiety and depression (Corrigan & Watson, 2002). They may feel isolated, unaccepted and have decreased self-esteem. This may cause them to avoid social interactions, which in turn worsens their mental state.

In addition to the impact on mental health, social stigma can also exacerbate social inequality. Stigmatized individuals or groups, such as those with mental illness, HIV/AIDS, or from minority groups, often face discrimination in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and access to healthcare (Link & Phelan, 2001). This discrimination can hinder their social and economic development, creating a cycle of poverty and marginalization.

Stigma can also undermine social cohesion within communities. When individuals feel stigmatized, they tend to withdraw from social interactions, which can reduce mutual trust and solidarity among community members (Thornicroft, 2006). This can create an unsupportive environment, where individuals feel unsafe to express themselves or seek help when needed.

To overcome social stigma, it is important to raise awareness and understanding in the community. Education and awareness campaigns can help change negative perceptions and promote inclusion. In addition, support from public policies that promote equality and access to services can help reduce the impact of stigma and improve the quality of life of stigmatized individuals (Alatartseva & Barysheva, 2015).

Social stigma is a complex and profound challenge in modern society. Its impact is not only felt by the stigmatized individual, but also by the community as a whole. When stigma takes root, it creates an unsupportive environment, where individuals feel alienated and unwelcome. Therefore, it is important for us to understand that stigma is not just an individual problem, but also a social problem that requires collective attention.

Education is one of the most effective tools in addressing social stigma. By increasing understanding of conditions that are often stigmatized, we can change existing negative perceptions. Educational programs that target schools, workplaces and communities can help create greater awareness about the importance of inclusion and empathy. When society better understands the experiences of stigmatized individuals, they are more likely to support and accept them.

In addition to education, the media also has an important role in shaping the narrative around social stigma. Accurate and positive representations of stigmatized individuals in the media can help change society's views. The media should commit to presenting stories that highlight the courage and resilience of individuals facing stigma, rather than just focusing on negative stereotypes. The media can be an agent of change that promotes understanding and acceptance.

Public policy must also play a role in addressing social stigma. The government and relevant agencies need to develop policies that support equality and access to services for stigmatized individuals. This includes providing affordable mental health services, job training programs, and adequate social support. By creating a supportive environment, we can help stigmatized individuals to actively participate in society.

Changes in people's perceptions and attitudes towards social stigma require time and sustained effort. Every individual has a role to play in creating a more inclusive and supportive society. By increasing awareness, education, and policy support, we can reduce social stigma and build stronger communities, where everyone feels valued and accepted, regardless of differences.

Social Stigma Formation through Perception of Certain Groups

Social perceptions of certain groups, such as minority groups or people with disabilities, play a significant role in the formation of stigma in society. Social stigma can be understood as a negative label attached to individuals or groups that are considered different from the prevailing social norms or standards (Goffman, 1963). The process of stigma formation often begins with misperceptions or limited perceptions about certain groups. For example, individuals belonging to minority groups or people with disabilities are often seen through a stereotypical lens that ignores the diversity in their life experiences. These perceptions then develop into social views that reinforce exclusion discrimination against them (Hunting et al., 2015).

Most social stigma is rooted in categorizing or labeling certain individuals or groups based on certain traits, such as race, religion, gender, or physical ability. In this case, minority groups and people with disabilities are often seen as "other" or abnormal (Goffman, 1963). When society begins to see these groups as different, they create social distance between themselves and the group. As a result, stigmatized groups experience social exclusion, both in the form of direct discrimination and through more subtle mechanisms, such as neglect or marginalization in social and professional perspectives (Williams & Fredrick, 2015).

These social perceptions that lead to the formation of stigma are influenced by many factors, including the media, cultural norms and everyday social experiences. The media, in particular, often influences how we perceive certain groups, by presenting limited and sometimes stereotypical images of them. People with disabilities, for example, are often portrayed as objects of pity or as individuals who are unable to perform tasks that are considered normal in society (Campbell, 2009). Such images reinforce the social view that people with disabilities require special attention or assistance, leading to the stigma that they are less able to contribute fully to society (Craig & Richeson, 2016).

Cultural norms prevailing in a society also play a major role in shaping social perceptions of certain groups. For example, in cultures that heavily emphasize physical perfection or beauty, people with disabilities or individuals with different physical appearances may be perceived as less attractive or not conforming to existing beauty standards. This can lead to them being stigmatized, which affects the individual, and exacerbates inequalities in society (Link & Phelan, 2001). Social

perceptions based on such cultural norms disadvantage stigmatized groups, and hinder social change towards inclusion.

It is important to note that this social stigmatization has an impact on the stigmatized individual, and on society as a whole. Societies that reinforce stigma against certain groups tend to create greater social inequality, which exacerbates social segregation and economic inequality. In this case, stigmatized individuals may face difficulties finding employment, getting an education, or participating in other social activities (Major & O'Brien, 2005). Deep-seated stigma can also worsen individuals' mental health, as they often feel isolated, undervalued, and unaccepted by the majority group.

However, although social stigma is often detrimental, changes in social perceptions can occur through more inclusive interactions and a deeper understanding of diversity. Positive interactions between different groups can help reduce prejudice and correct erroneous social perceptions. This signifies the importance of creating social spaces where individuals from stigmatized groups can interact with the general public without discrimination or stereotypes limiting them. Such an approach can help to break down the social barriers formed by negative perceptions of certain groups.

Overall, the formation of social stigma is a complex process that is influenced by many factors. Social perceptions formed from stereotypes and cultural norms can reinforce social inequalities and exacerbate the marginalization of certain groups. Therefore, it is important to continue analyzing how these perceptions are formed and how we can promote a more inclusive understanding to create a more just and equal society for all its members.

The Impact of Social Stigma on Individual Wellbeing and Social Stability

The impact of social stigma formed due to negative perceptions of minority groups or people with disabilities greatly affects individual well-being and overall social stability. This stigma often leads to stigmatized individuals feeling isolated and society. This marginalized in process marginalization affects their quality of life, both psychologically and physically, which exacerbate existing social problems. For example, individuals from stigmatized minority groups or people with disabilities often face major challenges in terms of access to employment, education, and health services (Phelan et al., 2008). As a result, they

are more vulnerable to poverty and continued social instability, which exacerbates inequalities in society (Dickins et al., 2016).

The impact of social stigma on individuals' psychological well-being is significant. The stigma experienced by individuals often leads to feelings of shame, low self-esteem, and depression. Link and Phelan (2001) point out that social stigma can affect individuals' mental health, by increasing the risk of mental disorders such as anxiety and depression. People with disabilities, for example, often feel unfairly treated and excluded from many aspects of social life, which further exacerbates feelings of isolation. This stigma causes them to feel disrespected by society and can exacerbate existing feelings of social anxiety, leading to a reduction in their overall quality of life (Pickett & Cunningham, 2017).

Social stigma also has the potential to exacerbate social inequalities in society. When minority groups or people with disabilities are constantly stigmatized, these inequalities become more deeply rooted and part of the social fabric. Corrigan et al. (2014) point out that long-standing stigma can result in internalized systemic discrimination, where even individuals within the stigmatized group begin to doubt their own ability to achieve success or be accepted by society. This exacerbates existing inequalities and creates a vicious cycle, where stigma leads to more social barriers and discrimination, further worsening the individual's circumstances.

In addition to impacting individuals, social stigma also affects overall social stability. Societies that hold discriminatory views towards certain groups tend to create inequality in exacerbate opportunities, which can divisions. Research by Major and O'Brien (2005) shows that persistent social stigma can worsen intergroup relations in society, creating tensions that can undermine social cohesion. When certain groups are treated unfairly or marginalized, this creates a larger gap between the dominant group and the stigmatized group, which can cause a rift in social stability.

Furthermore, social stigmatization of minority groups or persons with disabilities is also associated with denial of their rights, including access to education and economic opportunities. Schmitt et al. (2014) revealed that social stigma hinders an individual's ability to participate in productive economic and social life. In the sphere of employment, stigmatized individuals often face discrimination in hiring, promotion, or training opportunities, even though they have the same

qualifications as other individuals. These inequalities exacerbate economic instability in society, which in turn can affect overall economic growth.

The impact of social stigma against people with disabilities often impacts their physical health. Stigma can cause people with disabilities to withdraw from social or physical activities, which can lead to a decline in overall health. Miller et al. (2011) showed that feelings of isolation and discrimination can increase chronic stress, which in turn can worsen physical health conditions. People with disabilities who experience stigma tend to have poorer health compared to those who are not stigmatized, as they do not have equal access to health care or resources that can improve their quality of life.

The long-term impact of social stigma can also exacerbate individuals' distrust of social institutions and government. When individuals from minority groups or people with disabilities feel that they are not accepted or valued by society, they tend to develop distrust of the existing social and political systems. This can lead to low participation in social and political activities, further exacerbating inequalities and hampering efforts to create inclusive social change. For example, if individuals feel marginalized or discriminated against in the education or health systems, they may feel powerless to fight for their rights or participate in policy-making processes that could affect their lives (Anazodo et al., 2019).

Social stigma resulting from negative perceptions of minority groups or people with disabilities has a broad and profound impact on individual well-being and social stability. It impacts the mental and physical health of stigmatized individuals, worsens social inequalities, hinders economic development, and undermines social cohesion within communities. It is important to formulate policies and interventions that can reduce stigma and promote social inclusion for all groups in society.

Improving Social Perception to Reduce Stigma and Create an Inclusive Society

Social misperceptions of certain groups are often a source of deep-seated stigma, leading to discrimination and marginalization. To reduce this stigma, it is important to understand the roots of misperceptions and take a more inclusive approach to shaping society's views. One way this can be done is through education and awareness raising. Research shows that ignorance and unfamiliarity

with stigmatized groups are often the main reasons why negative perceptions arise (Corrigan & Penn, 1999). Therefore, a thorough education campaign, which focuses on facts and real experiences of stigmatized groups, can help change people's understanding and replace stereotypes with more accurate information.

addition to education, interactions also play a very important role in changing social perceptions. Positive interactions between different groups can help reduce prejudice and correct social misperceptions. By creating opportunities for individuals from dominant groups to interact with stigmatized groups in similar situations, we can reduce the social distance incomprehension. For example, by programs that promote collaboration between people with disabilities and the general public can help reduce prejudice against people with disabilities and increase understanding of the challenges they face in their daily lives.

In addition to interactions between groups, the media has a big role to play in shaping social perceptions. The media often reinforces negative stereotypes about certain groups, including minorities or people with disabilities, by presenting them inaccurately or as marginalized. Therefore, the media needs to take responsibility for portraying a fairer and more diverse representation of stigmatized groups. According to Gerbner et al. (2002), the media has the power to shape social norms and public perceptions so they can act as agents of change by presenting more inclusive and positive images of groups that are often overlooked or misunderstood by society.

Another effective strategy is through affirmative policies that promote inclusion and equality. Sue et al. (2007) revealed that policies that support diversity and inclusion can help reduce stigma by creating space for marginalized groups to participate in various aspects of social and economic life. These policies include affirmative action in education and employment, which provide more opportunities for minority groups and people with disabilities to compete equally with majority groups. Such policies help reduce discrimination and strengthen a sense of belonging and equality in society (Anazodo et al., 2019).

At the individual level, it is important to promote empathy and understanding through training programs or seminars that educate people about the challenges faced by stigmatized groups. Such training programs can help individuals overcome internalized attitudes or views towards certain groups. Empathy built through direct experience or through deeper knowledge of the lives of others can reduce the tendency to judge or treat certain groups discriminatively (Batson et al., 2002). This can help create a more open and inclusive society, which accepts differences and values them.

A more effective approach to reducing stigma also involves changes in the education system. An inclusive education system can provide space for students from different backgrounds to learn together, which in turn can reduce tensions and prejudices between different groups. Research shows that inclusive education can reduce discrimination and increase understanding between groups, especially when accompanied by a curriculum that promotes diversity and values differences (Stainback & Stainback, 1996). This helps to create a more tolerant generation who understand that differences are not to be feared or shunned but celebrated.

To reduce social stigma arising from misperceptions, a multidimensional approach is needed that includes education, intergroup interaction, affirmative policies, and strengthening empathy. Through effective education, people can understand the complexity of issues that cause stigma, while intergroup interaction can build bridges of understanding and reduce fears that are often rooted in ignorance. Affirmative action also plays an important role in providing equal opportunities for all individuals, creating a fairer environment.

By changing the way we see and interact with stigmatized groups, we can shape a more inclusive and equal society, where every individual is valued regardless of their background or condition. Strengthening empathy is key in this process, allowing us to put ourselves in others' shoes and understand their experiences.

Finally, it is important to regularly measure and evaluate the impact of efforts made to change social misperceptions. Link and Phelan (2001) point out that to achieve sustainable social change, it is crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of programs or policies implemented to reduce stigma and discrimination. This measurement can be done through social attitude surveys, in-depth interviews, or longitudinal studies that observe changes in people's perceptions over time. In this way, effective interventions can be continuously improved and adapted to meet new challenges to reduce social stigma. With these steps, we create more equitable social change, and build more humane communities, where everyone can feel accepted and valued.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, social misperceptions of certain groups, such as minority groups or people with disabilities, can create stigma that leads to discrimination and marginalization. This stigma not only adversely affects the stigmatized individuals, also affects overall social well-being, exacerbates inequalities, and undermines social cohesion. Therefore, changing social perceptions is crucial to creating a more inclusive, equal and just society. To address this issue, a multidimensional approach is required. Awareness-raising through education, promotion of empathy, inter-group interaction, and affirmative policies that support diversity and inclusion are measures that can help reduce stigma. The role of the media is crucial to portray more accurate and positive representations

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of stigmatized groups, which can improve the views of society as a whole. An inclusive education system would also be very effective in reducing prejudice and discrimination, creating a more tolerant and accepting generation. It is suggested that more programs focusing on understanding collaboration between different groups are needed. This can be done by providing platforms for sharing experiences and perspectives, and encouraging policies that prioritize social and economic inclusion. Continuous evaluation of policies and interventions is also important to ensure that their impact can be felt by all levels of society, especially those who are stigmatized. The steps taken can be more targeted and sustainable to build a more inclusive and equal society.

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