An investigation into the mismatch between self-identity and stereotypical image of affiliated LSE department

Group 8

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Abstract: The findings of our research show the existence of a mismatch between stereotypical perceptions and actual traits of an "average student" from certain LSE departments. This paper will examine the characteristics of this discrepancy in further detail. Using survey questions based on the established BFI-10 scale and quantitative measures of analysis, we investigate the correlation between the hypothesized and sampled personality traits of students within a department. Our guiding hypothesis is that people with personality traits which are highly valued at workplaces tend to experience less mismatch, as they are more likely to accept such favoured stereotypes. This study also extends on psychological and sociological literature to extrapolate the implications of stereotypes and personality types on other variables (eg career path).

1. Introduction

Our paper focuses on the idea of stereotypes within LSE's student body. We were inspired to embark upon this research due to the popular LSELove Facebook page where there are often posts describing certain attributes of students according to which department they belong to. We aim to investigate whether or not how students within departments are perceived by others corresponds with how these students perceive themselves and to determine possible mismatches. We will then explore the implications of such mismatches on the individual.

The research questions that guided our research were as follows:

1) What is the perceived image of students within each department at LSE?
2) How does a student from the actual department perceive themselves?
3) What is the correlation between perception and 'reality'?
4) What implications can we draw from such?

We hypothesised that qualitative students would experience more of a mismatch than quantitative students.

This paper begins with a literature review, followed by an explanation of our methodological approach along with an analysis of our survey results, this will then allow us to draw a conclusion from our results and discuss the implications of our findings.

2. Literature Review

Humans often identify themselves through their group memberships (Tajfel 1979) (Hogg, Abrams, Hinkle 2004). Our group has observed the phenomenon where LSE students often include information such as their current academic department when introducing themselves. It would be a rational assumption to say that the affiliated academic department is a group membership which the student identifies themselves with, and that this piece of information is included with the intent to inform. This carries the implication that both the subject and the recipient of the information should receive implicit information derived from this group membership.

2.1 The Formation and Impact of Stereotypes within Society

A stereotype is defined as 'a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing' according to Oxford Dictionaries. If stereotypes do exist across LSE departments, this stereotypical image would likely be part of the implicit connotations behind one's statement of group membership.

According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), stereotypes are generated through a three-step process: social categorisation, social identification and social comparison. During the second step, people begin assigning themselves the attributes and personality traits that their group is stereotyped for. This originates from the normal human cognitive process which groups things for simplicity. Departments in a university often encompass a vast number of degree courses which have been categorised into different departmental 'groups' for organisational efficiency. It is entirely plausible that stereotypes are formed in each departmental group. Another theory by Phelps (1972) and Arrow (1973) explains the formation of stereotypes as a product of statistical discrimination where the accumulation of certain traits in a group leads to the application of these traits to a group member by association. Our methodology draws upon this theory to construct the stereotypical persona of each department.

The possible existence of stereotypical views puts students from various departments at the risk of stereotype threat (Steele and Aronson 1995), a phenomenon where individuals confirm negative perceptions about their group by acting according to it. Moreover, stereotype threat spillover may even cause an individual to indulge in poor decision making (Inzlicht, Michael, Kang, Sonia K. 2010). Thus, this paper seeks to discover the existence and character of any such stereotypical views and amend them in relation to our findings as necessary.

2.2 The Distribution of Personality Traits Across Academic Fields

Multiple studies have examined the relationship between personality traits and academic majors. Past research shows that discrimination of academic majors and career aspirations by personality does exist among Taiwanese students (Lisa M. Larson et al., 2007). Moreover, the review of a study by Ackerman and Beier (2003) finds modest correlation between personality and career choice. A recent systemic study by Vedel (2016) finds a distinct distribution of BFI personality traits across academic disciplines. For example, students in humanities and art degrees have a higher tendency to show traits of Neuroticism and Openness, while scoring low on Conscientiousness.

From this, we have come to the rational belief in the existence of a certain dominant personality type in each LSE department. An additional study done by Humburg, M. (2012) finds that it is possible to estimate the choice of academic major by using the personality type of a child.

A logical conclusion can thus be made that people with certain personality traits are drawn to different academic areas. This indicates the likely presence of a significantly sized group of people with similar traits in different departments.

2.3. Direct Relationships Between Stereotypes and Personality Traits

Following the ideas of role theory, Popitz discusses how there are norms of behaviour that certain social groups feel compelled to follow, and can be socialised into. The Stanford Prison Experiment is a dramatic demonstration of this, where a number of men being arbitrarily divided into 'prisoners' and 'guards' fully fell into the roles assigned to them and acted more or less in successfully simulating an actual prison environment despite never having experienced it before.

The theory of 'conformity' and social influence tested in a variety of studies (such as Cialdini and Goldstein 2004, Kelman 1958, Forsyth 2013, Steele and Aronson 1995) shows an individual can change to match their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours to group norms. There exists a degree of feedback where individuals feel the need to relate certain stereotypes to their sense of self, and feel the pressure to act differently as a result of being conscious of those expectations.

It can be seen that both individual traits and general stereotypes feed back into each other. The aggregation of some individual traits leads to the formation of general stereotypes, and those within the group may then feel the pressure to conform to certain behaviours and attitudes.

It has been shown that certain personality attributes are highly valued in the workplace and that personality as a behavior or reputation, instead of personality as a disposition or identity, can be easily changed to conform to the norms favored by society (Sackett and Walmsley 2014). Our research draws on the concept of the system justification theory, which shows system-justifying beliefs as being endorsed by and bringing psychological well-being to both high status and low status groups, unless members of the low status group are not highly identified with their groups (O'Brien and Major 2005). As the most valued attributes in the workplace are found and nurtured in certain academic disciplines in university, we hypothesize that such traits would be well-perceived by both the individual undertaking those particular academic disciplines as well as by others. According to Vedel (2016), there are general pre-existing personality group differences across academic majors and they can be influenced by socialization effects. Hence, an assumption can be made that undergraduate students belonging to academic disciplines with high status or well-received personality attributes would exhibit greater in-group favoritism among themselves and would also be favored by students from other disciplines.

2.4 The Influence of Other Variables on the Distribution of Personality Traits

Acting upon the awareness that the difference in academic department is by no means the only independent variable affecting the distribution of personality traits among LSE students, three other factors likely to have significant influence has been identified and reviewed.

2.4.1 Ethnicity

Recent studies have identified differences in personality between cultures and nations, and that they generally do not match up with the commonly held stereotypes of national character (Jarrett 2017). As McCrae and Terraccino (2006) have noted, there is a consensus of national stereotype but such shared perceptions tend to lack accuracy. Regional explanations for the mismatch between average national personality type and shared perception of national character ranges from differences in a type of gene associated with risk-taking to historic migration patterns that show regions on the frontier of exploration exhibiting greater risk-taking traits and openness (Rentfrow, Gosling and Potter 2008; Ciani, Edelman and Ebstein 2013).

Moreover, ethnic distinctions in personality types can be associated with high job performances for some ethnic groups to a certain extent. Despite focusing solely on New Zealand, Australia and South Africa due to limited data from other regions, Packman et al. (2005) show that small yet significant differences were detected between country and ethnic groups for the two important traits associated with high job performance, which are low neuroticism and high conscientiousness.

2.4.2 Gender

Studies have shown justification for gender stereotype in terms of personality traits. The traditional male and female genders each hold certain personality type codes with more prevalence than the other sex. This phenomenon is reported on both the BFI scale (Weisberg, DeYoung and Hirsh 2011) where females reported higher Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism than males; and the Holland personality type code (Frew and Shaw 1999) where the most frequent trait found in females was S (Social). The Extraversion and Social codes are parallel in terms of the trait in question, rendering results consistent.

In particular, a study by Del Guidice, M., Booth, T., and Irwing, P. (2012) even suggests that gender discrepancies in personality are of comparable magnitude to those of aggression and occupational choices. Such gender differences in personality typing is shown to be applicable across cultures (Costa et al., 2011; McCrae et al., 2005), suggesting that while both ethnicity and gender has an influence on the distribution of personality traits, these two factors are likely to be independent of each other.

Referring to the previous section, the presence of stereotypes fosters the development of more distinct personality distribution across different groups. This is also found to be the case between genders. The establishment of perceived gender differences in personality was shown to contribute to the formation of gender dissimilarities in personality trait distribution. (McCrae R., et al. 2014)

2.4.3 Socioeconomic Status (SES)

An individual's socioeconomic background is formed of multiple factors, including but not limited to parent's education level, household income and the subject's own educational level. A study done by Duke University (Jonassaint R,. et al. 2011) finds significant influence of each of the above factors on the personality of the subject as measured by the BFI. Divergent results were found, depending on whether the mother's or the father's education level was used in the SES index: higher Extraversion and Openness was observed in subjects with high SES when the mother's education level is being used; on the other hand, high Neuroticism and low Conscientiousness associates with low SES indexed with father's education level. Regardless of divergence, it can be accepted that SES is a factor influencing the development of individual personality traits.

The sample population of the study includes both white Americans and African Americans. It was found that there are no racial and sex differences on how SES affects personality. This further suggests that ethnicity, gender and SES are independent in terms of their effects on personality traits.

3. Methodology

3.1 Hypotheses

Our first hypothesis is that there will be statistically significant mismatches in the self-perceived and stereotypical scales in certain personality traits displayed by departments.

Our second hypothesis is that the extent of mismatches between the stereotypical perceptions and the actual characteristics of students across different departments differ depending on the types of

personality traits possessed by a typical student within that department. Studies showed the importance of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness in the workplace and Extraversion and Neuroticism possess relative importance in the workplace (Sackett and Walmsley, 2014), hence students possessing these higher valued personality traits are more likely to accept the highly valued stereotypes, and they tend to have less mismatch between their self-identity and stereotypes based on OCEAN and Holland personality traits. We first identify the personality traits that are most likely possessed by a typical student in each department using our data. We then hypothesise that the higher a department scores in the highly-valued personality, the smaller the mismatch will be.

Other factors affecting the level of mismatch include the "social value" of the departments studied, defined by the scale of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness possessed by students of the departments, as well as demographic information of participants including years of study, gender and ethnic group. These factors will be treated as controlled variables in the mismatch model. Our third hypothesis is that the years of study within their departments at the LSE will positively affect their perceived level of similarity to the department, i.e. the longer we spend studying in a particular department, the more we are socialised by norms of that department, hence reducing the level of mismatch. The impacts of demographic factors on personality traits of a student such as gender, ethnic, and socio-economic stereotypes will not be studied in depth in our model.

3.2 Design

3.2.1 Questionnaire Design and Data Collection

We used a three-part questionnaire in our study to collect responses from LSE students across ten different departments, using the snowball sampling method.

The first part of the survey concerns demographic factors determining the mismatch as defined in our hypotheses, including departments, gender, self-perceived socioeconomic status, and participant's years of study.

The second part focuses on the self-perceived, i.e. true self-identity of students from a particular department. It includes Big Five Inventory-10 (BFI-10) test, which is a shorter version of the full-scale BFI-44 test consisting of two questions per scale, and a simplified version of Holland code career test designed by ourselves. The former categorises people's personality based on the "Big Five" personality types, which is more commonly known as OCEAN (Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism), while the latter divides people into six personality types including Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Participants are also asked for the similarity of their self-perception to a typical person from their department.

The third part studies the stereotypical image of other departments and takes a similar form to the second part, which focuses on participants' perceptions of a typical student from one other department from a choice of 10 departments. Participants were also asked to describe this stereotype in their own words.

A copy of the online Google form distributed can be found in the Appendix.

3.2.2 Defining variables

Scales for each personality type are ranged from a numerical scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing a very weak possession of that personality trait, and 5 representing a very strong possession of the trait. There are a total of 11 dimensions for personality traits, as mentioned in 3.2.1. The true image of the students from a department is represented by a 11-dimensional scale using the means of each of the 11 personality types possessed by participants from that department, and a stereotypical image

represented by the means of the personality scales according to perceptions of a typical student from the department studied by participants from other departments.
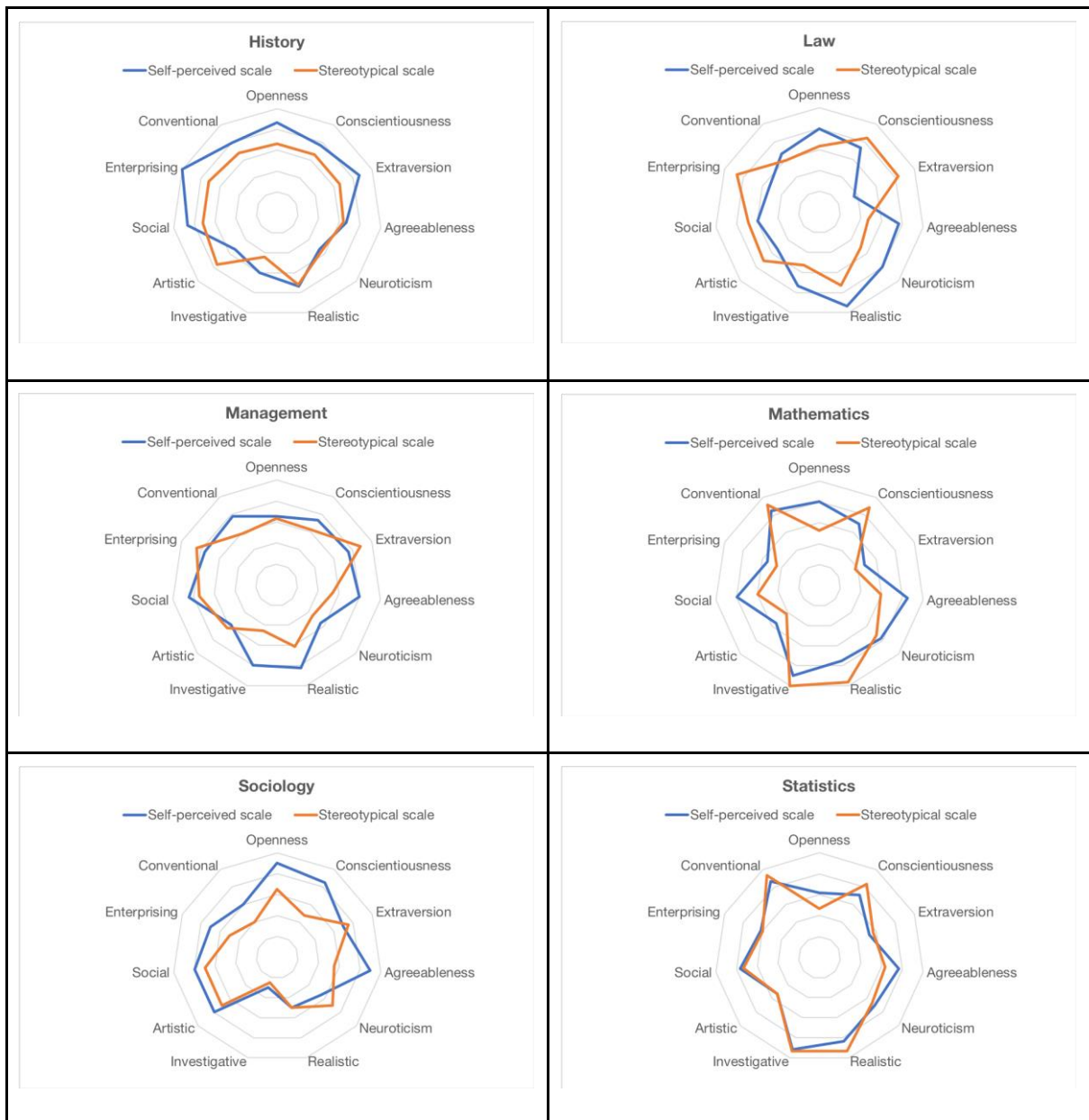
For Hypothesis 3, multiple regression analyses have been carried out to investigate the relationships between "similarity", defined by the sense of similarity a students feels to their affiliated department, as well as "mismatch", defined by the the mismatch between the average scale of personality types and those of their affiliated department. Demographic factors include "department", "gender", "country of origin", "ethnic group", "years of study" as defined by the number of years spent studying at LSE from "1" to "3", and "SES" as defined by the self-perceived socioeconomic status of the student, on a scale from "1" to "10".

3.2.3 Limitations

Due to the time constraints of our research, we were not able to collect the ideal amount of responses, especially from humanities department including Anthropology and History, which weakens the representativeness of our sample and the "true" average image of students within that department. A quantitative relationship between the BFI-10 and the Holland code scoring system has not been established, which might affect the calculations of mismatch. Moreover, the "true" average image of students within a department is affected by participants' sense of similarity to a typical person in their department since their responses would contribute negatively to the average figures of that department.

4. Empirical Results

Participants were 103 LSE undergraduates from ten academic departments including Accounting, Anthropology, Economics, Government, History, Law, Management, Mathematics, Sociology, and Statistics. 63% of the participants are female, compared with 37% of male respondents. 71.8% of the students are Asian/Asian British, while 22% are White and the remaining 7% are from other ethnic groups. Our data shows a wide range for countries of origins, as well as for perceived socioeconomic status, ranging from 2 to 10 on a scale from 1-10, with 10 being the highest possible perception of one's SES background. 51.8% of the participants are first year students, with 30% from second year and 18.2% from third year.

In order to examine our hypothesis, the following results are given in three parts. Firstly, the mismatch between self-perceived and affiliated department stereotypes are shown by ten radar charts. Secondly, t-tests are carried out to examine whether there have been significant mismatches in personality types found in the grouped departments. Thirdly, we investigate the relationship between social values of departments and highly valued personalities. Finally, we look into the relationship between "years of study" and "socioeconomic status (SES)", and scales of similarity and mismatch, by treating other demographic factors as dummy variables in our regression analysis.

4.1 Mismatch between self-perceived and stereotypical perceived scales of personality types

The following radar charts presented how each of the ten departments performed in the 11-dimensional personality tests. The blue line shows the personality scales of students within the department studied, and the orange line shows how others perceived a typical student from that department would perform in the personality test.

From the diagrams above, we can see that students from quantitative departments such as Statistics, Mathematics, Accounting and Economics experience smaller mismatches between the self-perceived and their corresponding stereotypical scales of personality, while there are considerably large mismatches for students from departments of humanities subjects including Law, History and Sociology, partially due to the limited sample from these departments. A larger sample size should provide a more concrete conclusion of the mismatch.

To investigate the statistical significance of these mismatches, t-tests have been carried out on large mismatches[1] in personality types. Similar departments are grouped due to limited sample size. T-tests have been run on the five major mismatches found in the grouped personality scales, where the means of self-perceived scales and stereotypical scales of the personality type studied within the departmental groups are compared.

The results are summarised as below.

Figure 1. T-tests on personality types with large mismatches within departmental groups

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[1] Large mismatches are defined as an equal or greater than 1 difference in the self-perceived and stereotypical scales on a personality type.

	Mean$_{self-perceived}$	Mean$_{stereotypical}$	Difference	Sig.
T-test 1: Accounting/Mathematics/Statistics - Agreeableness	4.000	2.940	1.060	<0.001***
T-test 2: Economics - Openness	3.740	2.455	1.285	<0.001***
T-test 3: Anthropology/Government/History/Sociology - Investigative	2.850	1.670	1.180	0.001***
T-test 4: Government/Law - Agreeableness	3.654	2.420	1.234	<0.000***
T-test 5: Government/Law - Investigative	3.150	2.480	0.670	0.091*

Note: * $p<0.1$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$; "Difference" is defined as the absolute difference between Mean$_{self-perceived}$ and Mean$_{stereotypical}$.

The results of the t-tests inform us of statistically significant mismatches in the self-perceived and stereotypical scales in: Agreeableness within the departments of Accounting/Mathematics/Statistics; Openness within the department of Economics; Investigative within the departments of Anthropology/Government/History/Sociology; Agreeableness and Investigative within the department of Government/Law.

4.2 Relationship between social values and mismatch in highly valued personality traits

To test our second hypothesis that departments with higher social value will have smaller mismatches in Conscientiousness (C) and Agreeableness (A), the sum of the average mismatch in C and A are plotted against social values which we assign each department according to the following table:

Department	Social Value
Anthropology/Government/History/Sociology	1
Law/Management	2
Accounting/Mathematics/Statistics	3
Economics	4

Figure 2. Correlation between social value and Mismatch in C and A
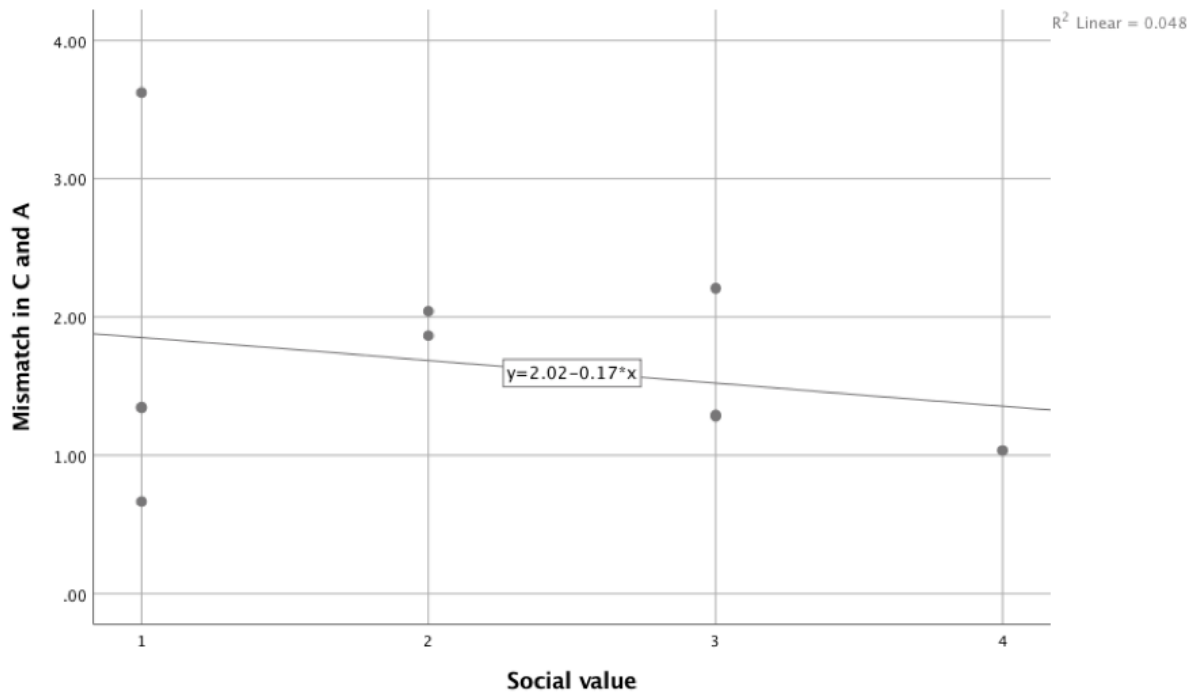
A slightly negative correlation has been found between the mismatch in Conscientiousness and Agreeableness and the social values of the department, modelled by the correlation equation $y = 2.02 - 0.17x$, which weakly confirmed our hypothesis. However this is not significant as indicated by the R^2 value of only 0.048.

Figure 3. Correlation between Social value and Mismatch in N and E
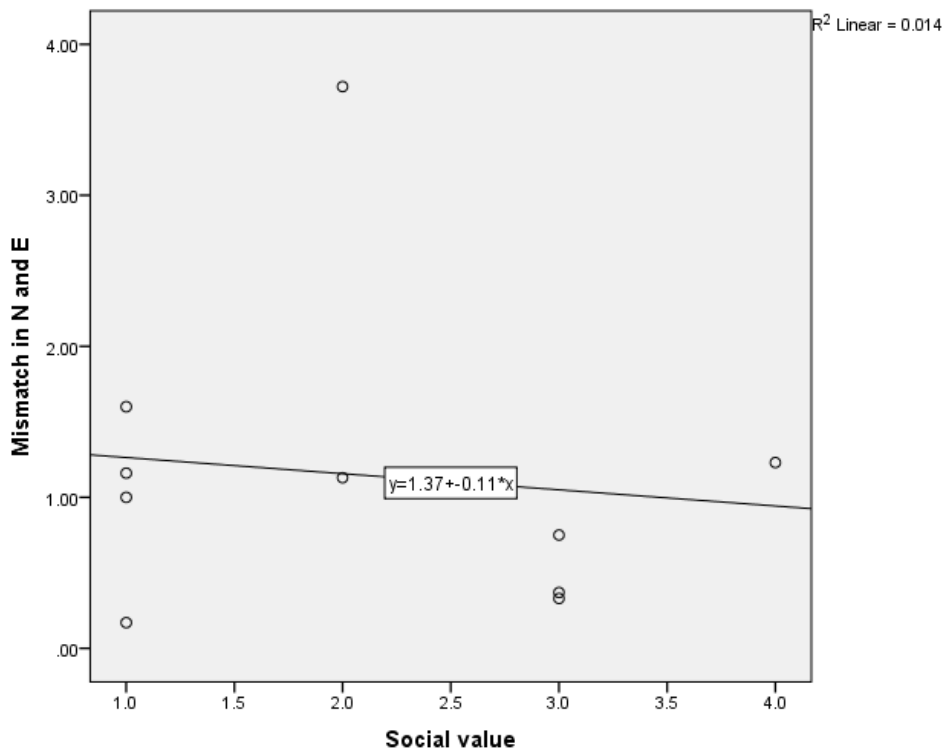
A slightly negative correlation has been found between mismatch in Neuroticism and Extraversion and the social values of the department, modelled by the correlation equation $\square = 1.37 - 0.11\square$, which weakly confirmed our hypothesis. Again, this is not significant as indicated by the R^2 value of only 0.014.

4.3 Relationship between "years of study" and "socioeconomic status (SES)" and scales of "similarity" and "mismatch"

To further investigate the relationship between "years of study", "socioeconomic status" (SES) and the scales of similarity and mismatch, multiple regression analyses have been carried out to investigate the significance of the explanatory variables, with modified models treating other demographic factors such as "department", "gender", "countries of origin", "ethnic group" as dummy variables in the regression analyses.

4.3.1 Relationship between "years of study" and similarity scale

Figure 4. Relationship between "years of study" and similarity scale

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Years of study	0.246** (0.1218)	0.317*** (0.1105)	0.299*** (0.1020)
SES		0.102* (0.0580)	0.188*** (0.0542)
Controls for department	N	Y	Y
Controls for gender	N	N	Y
Controls for ethnic group	N	N	Y
Controls for countries of origin	N	N	Y
N	86	86	86

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01.

The primary coefficient of interest appears in the first row of the table, which is "Years of study". Column 2 adds control for SES and department, and column 3 adds control for "gender", "ethnic group" and "countries of origin".

Adding controls results in a moderately increasing positive coefficient between years of study and similarity, despite minor decreases from Column 2 to Column 3. This suggests that as the years of study increase, the similarity between the identities of students themselves and typical students from the same department increases.

4.3.2 Relationship between "SES" and similarity scale

Figure 5. Relationship between "SES" and similarity scale

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Years of study		0.317*** (0.1105)	0.299*** (0.1020)
SES	0.068 (0.0682)	0.102* (0.0580)	0.188*** (0.0542)
Controls for department	N	Y	Y
Controls for gender	N	N	Y
Controls for ethnic group	N	N	Y
Controls for countries of origin	N	N	Y
N	86	86	86

Note: * $p<0.1$; ** $p<0.05$; *** $p<0.01$.

The primary coefficient of interest appears in the second row of the table, which is "SES". Column 2 adds control for SES and department, and column 3 adds control for "gender", "ethnic group" and "countries of origin".

Adding controls results in a steadily increasing positive coefficient between SES and similarity. This suggests that as the student's socioeconomic status increases, the similarity between the identities of students themselves and typical students from the same department increases.

4.3.3 Relationship between "years of study" and the magnitude of mismatch

Figure 6. Relationship between "years of study" and the magnitude of mismatch

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Years of study	0.030 (0.0348)	0.034 (0.0350)	0.005 (0.0347)
SES		-0.002 (0.0183)	0.012 (0.0185)
Controls for department	N	Y	Y

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Controls for gender	N	N	Y
Controls for ethnic group	N	N	Y
Controls for countries of origin	N	N	Y
N	86	86	86

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01.

The primary coefficient of interest appears in the first row of the table, which is "Years of study". Column 2 adds control for SES and department, and column 3 adds control for "gender", "ethnic group" and "countries of origin".

Adding controls results in a mildly decreasing positive coefficient between years of study and mismatch. This fails to confirm our hypothesis, since the data shows that as the years of study increase, the mismatch between the self-perceived identities of students and the stereotypes of their affiliated department actually increases.

4.3.4 Relationship between "SES" and the magnitude of mismatch

Figure 7. Relationship between "SES" and the magnitude of mismatch

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Years of study		0.034 (0.0350)	0.005 (0.0347)
SES	0.004 (0.0193)	-0.002 (0.0183)	0.012 (0.0185)
Controls for department	N	Y	Y
Controls for gender	N	N	Y
Controls for ethnic group	N	N	Y
Controls for countries of origin	N	N	Y
N	86	86	86

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01.

The primary coefficient of interest appears in the second row of the table, which is "SES". Column 2 adds control for SES and department, and column 3 adds control for "gender", "ethnic group" and "countries of origin".

Adding controls results in a fluctuating coefficient between SES and mismatch. Based on Column 3, as the student's socioeconomic status increases, the mismatch between the self-perceived identities of students and the stereotypes of their affiliated department increases.

4.4 Further Discussion of Results:

As the results have indicated, the mismatch between self-identity and the shared perception of the academic department is not explained by the social values of the majors, and thus falsifying our central hypothesis based on the system justification theory. However, explanations informed by another perspective of the system justification theory and the literature review can be given to elucidate the potential reasons behind certain outcomes of our research. It is possible that the increase in a student's self-perceived similarity with a typical person from his or her department as the student's socioeconomic status increases can be explained by another perspective of the system justification theory, in which members of the middle and upper-middle classes see the overarching social system or educational institution as good, fair and legitimate. This corresponds with the result of our research in section 4.3.2. On the other hand, the increase in perceived similarity with one's own department as the student concerned studies longer in the LSE can be explained by socialization effect with the academic department. Future research should be conducted to explore possible explanations for the results.

5. Discussion

5.1 Implications and contributions

With distinct differences in prominent personality traits between LSE departments, we then extrapolate the implications of these prevalent traits, drawing upon pre-existent research.

5.1.1 Academic performance

There is significant moderate positive correlation between Conscientiousness and average grades, and significant weak positive correlation between Openness and average grades. (Seyedeh Maryam Geramian, Shima Mashayekhi , Mohd. Tajudin Bin Hj. Ninggal 2012)

With reference to our results, Sociology students with the highest levels of conscientiousness should have relatively higher academic performance on average. Further studies will be required to prove the validity of that statement, however.

5.1.2 Career prospects

Previous research has looked at the most desired traits in different vocations, as well as the correlations between pay levels and the individual's dominant BFI personality traits. (Nandi and Nicoletti 2014). In general, high levels of conscientiousness is found to predict higher career success, while neuroticism negatively correlates to it. (Judge T., Higgins, C., Thoresen, C., Barrick, M., 2006) This paper brings out the possibility of estimating the employability and career success of students from each LSE department through linking the average traits found in this study with their associated effects. Further research would be needed on the applicability of these effects to LSE students specifically.
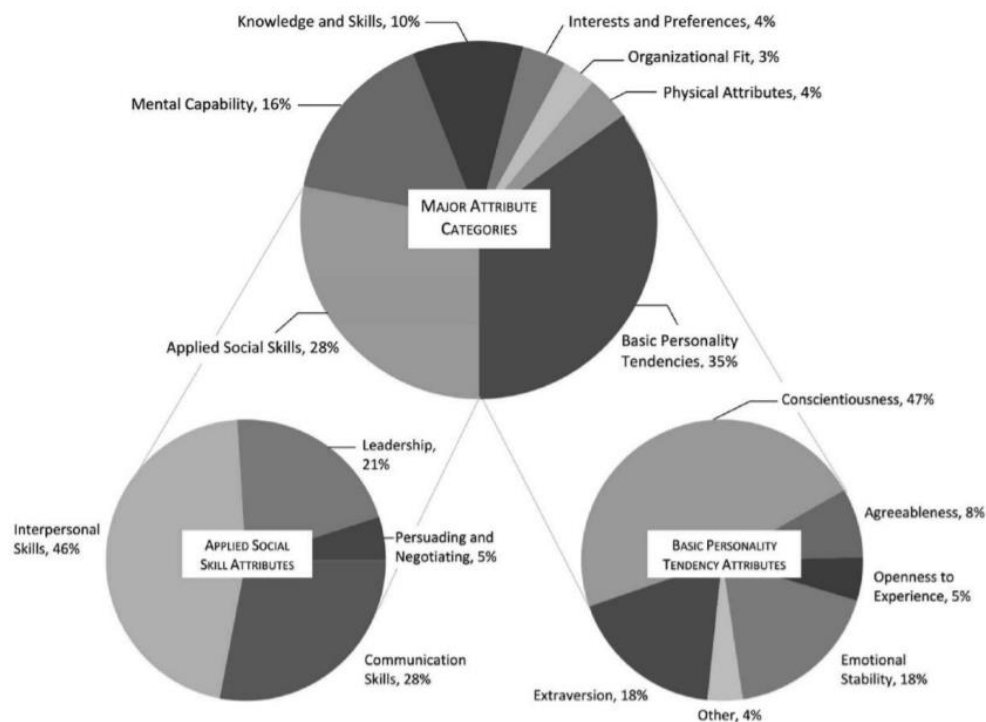
Fig. 1. Attributes most frequently assessed in employment interviews.

(Sackett and Walmsley 2014)

By bridging the study of personality traits across academic majors with the phenomenon of interdepartmental stereotype, our research contributes to academic improvement in both personal and structural levels.

On a personal level, university applicants can make better informed choices for degree courses which match their individual personalities. Moreover, understanding the mismatch between stereotypical perceptions and actual traits of an 'average student' from certain LSE departments helps to create favorable recognition for undergraduate students undertaking a less well-perceived academic major. However, as Vedel (2016) notes, future research should investigate more into whether students with personality traits typically found within their academic disciplines actually achieve better academic performance.

On a structural level, our research points to the importance of structuring the undergraduate learning environment for better academic achievement and experience. With the prevalent traits in each department found, faculty may choose to adapt curriculum and department events accordingly to complement existing strengths and compensate for weaker traits. For academic majors with great mismatch between student self-identity and their perceived image, there is a need for educational institutions to adopt stereotype-reducing strategies. Tung and King (2016) suggests the establishment of legitimacy for 'low status' academic disciplines through promotion of their applicability to other academic fields.

5.2 Limitations and further development

The time constraint under which our research was conducted led to issues with obtaining a large enough random sample size of students from each department. To obtain more reliable results, it would be necessary to replicate our methods with a much larger pool of participants.

In addition, we acknowledge the existence of factors which interfere with the results of our study. First of which is the ethnic background of each participant. Through our review of existing literature, we have found that there are certain personality traits more prevalent in certain ethnic groups. Hence, prevalent traits in each department may actually be caused by a higher proportion of students from a certain ethnic background in the said department, instead of being in relation to only the academic department in question. Same also applies to the issue of gender differences in distribution of personality traits. The uneven male-to-female student ratio may have led to a distortion in the frequency of a trait being found in each department. In our sample, the socioeconomic background of the participants appeared to be positively skewed. It would be extremely likely that the traits found in our sample would show more of those associated with individuals from higher SES backgrounds.

As the questionnaire is not designed to focus on the effects of gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic class on personality types in each academic departments, the effects of these variables as factors computed into data analysis may not be adequately presented in the outcome. For example, with regards to measuring ethnicity, we have not included questions on the extent to which participants identify themselves with their ethnic group membership, nor the years they had spent living in their countries of origin.

However, as our research question is specifically in the context of LSE, it could be argued that the above uneven proportions of students' ethnicity, gender and SES are simply characteristics of the student population in LSE, and thus will not bear such a great significance on the distribution of traits across departments if these conditions are applicable to the whole university.

Furthermore, our study was designed to test for the correlation between the stereotypical perceptions and personality traits found to be prevalent in reality - not causality. The link between stereotypes and development of personality traits has been explored in the literature review. However, further research would have to be conducted in order to prove the relationship between the two within LSE.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, our report provides results for each of our three hypotheses. First, there is confirmation of a mismatch between the stereotypical and actual personality traits found in certain departments. Second, there is weak evidence supporting our hypothesis concerning negative correlation between social values of academic disciplines and mismatch. Third, there is statistically significant evidence for a relationship between a student's years of study and their socioeconomic status, and their perceived similarity to the typical traits in the department, but the disparity between their self-identities and perceived stereotypes is exacerbated, though insignificantly.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Survey

Questionnaire: Student Self-Identity and Perceived Image of Affiliated Department

Research Question:
Breaking the Confines of Stereotypes: An Investigation into the Mismatch between Self-identity and Image of Affiliated LSE Department

* Required

Information for Participants

Thank you for considering participating in this study.
(You may choose to enter your email at the end of the survey for a chance to WIN £10!)

This page outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant, if you agree to take part.

This questionnaire should take no more than 8 minutes to complete.

About our project:

The groups that we belong to often have an implicit connotation - a stereotypical image. To what extent do these stereotypes reflect the actual situation?

This aspect of our research project is to discover any possible mismatches between stereotypes and reality, and from there, explore the implications of both perceived and actual character traits on an individual.

This survey focuses on the stereotypical character of students in different LSE departments.
In the first part of the survey, we would like to know how you would describe yourself as a person.
In the second part of the survey, we would like to know your opinion on what an "average" student is like in certain academic departments within LSE, based on the same criteria questions.

PLEASE NOTE THAT PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY IS VOLUNTARY.

If you are happy to take part in this study, please fill in the following consent form.

Benefits of taking part in our study

Your responses will help us learn more about whether the perceived image of a student in one or two (for dual degree students) academic departments matches with the average personas of students in the departments they belong to.

You may also choose to provide your email address in order to receive your test results as well as entering a draw to win £10!

Confidentiality

The data you have provided comply with the UK Data Protection Act and your responses will remain anonymous.

Any responses made will be kept confidential and all data will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Contact

For further queries about our research project, please contact: lsegroups8@gmail.com

1. **Consent** *
   Check all that apply.

   ☐ I agree to have my answers collected and analysed for the purposes of this research.

   ☐ I understand that I am free to decline to participate and may withdraw at any point.

   ☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet provided for the above study.

Part 1: Demographics

2. What department are you in? (for dual degrees, select most relevant option) *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Accounting

◯ Anthropology

◯ Economics

◯ Government

◯ History

◯ Law

◯ Management

◯ Mathematics

◯ Sociology

◯ Statistics

◯ Others

3. Please specify your department if you choose "others" in the above question.

_____

4. Your years of study at LSE (in your current department) *

If you have transferred between departments during your period of study, please only select the number of years you have studied in your CURRENT department.
Mark only one oval.

◯ 1

◯ 2

◯ 3 and above

5. Choose one option that best describes your gender. *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Female

◯ Male

◯ Prefer not to say

6. **Choose one option that best describes your country of origin.** *

Mark only one oval.

- ⬭ Afghanistan
- ⬭ Albania
- ⬭ Algeria
- ⬭ Andorra
- ⬭ Angola
- ⬭ Anguilla
- ⬭ Antigua & Barbuda
- ⬭ Argentina
- ⬭ Armenia
- ⬭ Australia
- ⬭ Austria
- ⬭ Azerbaijan
- ⬭ Bahamas
- ⬭ Bahrain
- ⬭ Bangladesh
- ⬭ Barbados
- ⬭ Belarus
- ⬭ Belgium
- ⬭ Belize
- ⬭ Benin
- ⬭ Bermuda
- ⬭ Bhutan
- ⬭ Bolivia
- ⬭ Bosnia & Herzegovina
- ⬭ Botswana
- ⬭ Brazil
- ⬭ Brunei Darussalam
- ⬭ Bulgaria
- ⬭ Burkina Faso
- ⬭ Myanmar/Burma
- ⬭ Burundi
- ⬭ Cambodia
- ⬭ Cameroon
- ⬭ Canada
- ⬭ Cape Verde
- ⬭ Cayman Islands
- ⬭ Central African Republic
- ⬭ Chad
- ⬭ Chile
- ⬭ China
- ⬭ Colombia
- ⬭ Comoros
- ⬭ Congo
- ⬭ Costa Rica
- ⬭ Croatia
- ⬭ Cuba
- ⬭ Cyprus
- ⬭ Czech Republic
- ⬭ Democratic Republic of the Congo
- ⬭ Denmark

7. **Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background.** *

Mark only one oval.

- ⭕ White (English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British / Others)
- ⭕ Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups
- ⭕ Asian / Asian British (Indian / Pakistani / Bangladeshi / Chinese / Others)
- ⭕ Black / African / Caribbean / Black British (African / Caribbean / Others)
- ⭕ Other: _____

8. **What is your perceived socio-economics status in your home country?** *

On a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being upper class, where would you place yourself on the scale?
Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕

Part 2: Your Own Personality Types

Instruction: please answer the following two questions.
1. How well do the following statements describe your personality?
2. How would you describe your similarity to the other students in your department?

9. **I see myself as someone who...** *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree a little	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree a little	Strongly Agree
is reserved and shy.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
is generally trustworthy.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
tends to be lazy.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
is relaxed, handles all kinds of stress very well.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
has few artistic interests.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
is outgoing and sociable.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
likes to point out others' mistakes.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
does a thorough job.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
gets nervous easily; finds public speaking extremely difficult.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
has an active imagination.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
is practical, mechanical, and realistic.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
is good at understanding and solving science and math problems.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
is artistic, expressive, and original.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
is social, helpful, and friendly.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
is good at leading and persuading people, and selling things or ideas.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕
is good at working with written records and numbers in a systematic, orderly way.	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕

10. **How similar/different would you think you are to a typical person from your department?** *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very different	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	⭕	Very similar

Part 3: Perceptions of Other Departments

Instruction: please select one department that is DIFFERENT from your affiliated department and answer the following two questions.
1. How well do the following statements describe the personality of a typical student from that

department?

2. What other aspects would you also like to mention to describe a typical student from that department?

11. **Please select one department from the list which is DIFFERENT from your affiliated department.** *

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Accounting
- ( ) Anthropology
- ( ) Economics
- ( ) Government
- ( ) History
- ( ) Law
- ( ) Management
- ( ) Mathematics
- ( ) Sociology
- ( ) Statistics

12. **I see a typical student from that department above as someone who...** *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree a little	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree a little	Strongly Agree
is reserved and shy.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
is generally trustworthy.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
tends to be lazy.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
is relaxed, handles all kinds of stress very well.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
has few artistic interests.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
is outgoing and sociable.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
likes to point out others' mistakes.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
does a thorough job.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
gets nervous easily; finds public speaking extremely difficult.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
has an active imagination.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
is practical, mechanical, and realistic.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
is good at understanding and solving science and math problems.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
is artistic, expressive, and original.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
is social, helpful, and friendly.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
is good at leading and persuading people, and selling things or ideas.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
is good at working with written records and numbers in a systematic, orderly way.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

13. **I would also describe a typical student from that department as someone who...**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you so much for taking part in our research project!

We are very grateful of the time you have taken to assist in our research. We truly value the information you have provided and your responses would contribute greatly to our study.

Once again, we are extremely appreciative for your time and effort, and here is one way we can express our gratitude...