Stereotypes in Services – A Systematic Literature Review to Move from Scattered Insights to Generalizable Knowledge

By Hannes Fleischer

Over the last 40 years, the impact of stereotypes in a service context has been investigated repeatedly, as stereotypes can have a strong influence on interactions during the service encounter. The many academic studies analysed various stereotypes, took a customer or employee perspective, investigated attitudinal or behavioural outcomes before and after an interaction and found both positive and negative effects of stereotypes. Thus, a synthesis of research is needed that integrates existing knowledge to clarify what researchers have learnt about stereotypes in services. The main contribution of our research is to aggregate and categorise the highly specialized findings that exist on specific stereotypes and thus make the current knowledge more generalisable. The results of our study reveal that a strong focus on customer stereotypes regarding employees exists, but other stereotype constellations are less often investigated. Similarly, the investigation of more subtle stereotype triggers and the consideration of contextual factors should receive more attention. Finally, even as we identified meaningful managerial implications to address the consequences of stereotypes, academic papers need to include a practitioner's perspective more consequently.

Hannes Fleischer is Research Assistant at the Ingolstadt School of Management, Catholic University of Eichstaett-Ingolstadt, Auf der Schanz 49, 85049 Ingolstadt, Germany, E-Mail: hannes.fleischer @ku.de

1. Introduction

Italians are fashionable, and Germans are good engineers. The vegetarian dish is for the lady, the steak is for the gentleman and older people cannot deal with new technologies. Whether we like it or not and whether we admit it or not, stereotypes are omnipresent in multiple situations in our society. Ranging from hiring decisions to TV advertising and simple perceptions of other drivers during traffic. "Stereotypes are incomplete and overgeneralised beliefs a person holds towards a particular social group" (Stones et al. 1997, p. 292). They are "often automatically activated and play a significant role in making judgments about people in social interactions" (Gill et al. 2017, p. 523). Individuals are more likely to rely on these subconscious judgments in situations of uncertainty when only limited information are available (Cowart and Brady 2014; Singletary and Hebl 2009). Since service encounters are characterised by a perceived degree of uncertainty, based on the distinctive characteristics of services and the fact that we regularly interact with strangers in service encounters, services are particularly susceptible to stereotypes (Berentzen et al. 2008; Mai and Hoffmann 2014; Thakor et al. 2008). Due to this susceptibility of services for stereotypes, over the past years, a multitude of studies have analysed the impact of stereotypes in a service context (e.g., King et al. 2006; Lee et al. 2011; Scott et al. 2013; Wan and Wyer 2015).

While the interest in the subject has produced a broad body of knowledge, it must be noted that this knowledge is very fragmented in terms of various attributes. (1) The numerous studies were conducted in a variety of research disciplines, such as marketing, management, psychology, hospitality and services (Hekman et al. 2010; Kim et al. 2017; Wieseke et al. 2012). (2) They investigated a variety of stereotypes, ranging from gender (Fischer et al. 1997) and race (Cowart and Lehnert 2018) to sexual orientation (Rule et al. 2016) or tattoos (Dean 2010). (3) The several articles have taken different perspectives within the service encounter. They studied customers stereotyping employees (Matta and Folkes 2005), employees stereotyping customers (Cowart and Darke 2014), or customers stereotyping other customers (Thakor et al. 2008). (4) The authors focused on multiple different outcomes of stereotypes ranging from pre-purchase attitudinal perceptions, such as the expected competence of an employee (Gill et al.

2017), to post-purchase behavioural intentions, such as word-of-mouth (Zolfagharian et al. 2018). (5) Perhaps most importantly, published articles have found both positive and negative stereotype effects, as well as no effects at all, even for one and the same stereotype (Fischer et al. 1997; Matta and Folkes 2005; Snipes et al. 2006). In conclusion, it must be noted that although a broad knowledge on individual stereotypes, in specific industries and under specific circumstances does exist, a comprehensive overview that integrates also contradictory results is not available.

It is against this backdrop that the present work seeks to provide a synthesis of existing research to clarify what researchers have already learnt about stereotypes in services and what remains unexplored. Our conclusive review of the existing research thus contributes to service research in multiple ways: (1) We provide a state-of-the-art overview of the existing research. (2) We analyse the often highly specialised findings and categorise them to make them generalisable, that is, independent of a specific stereotype (age, gender, race) or a specific context (service type, service outcome). (3) We chronologically align and structure the investigated mechanism of stereotypes within a framework. The framework integrates the underlying theory, the directions of stereotypes (who uses stereotypes about whom), what stimuli trigger stereotypes under which contextual circumstances, and the consequences of stereotypes. (4) The aggregation and categorisation of the existing knowledge also provides practitioners with valuable and generalisable strategies to counteract stereotypes. This is especially important given that managerial implications were often limited in previous stereotype research. (5) Lastly, we provide suggestions for future research.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows: First, we outline the relevance of stereotypes in services. Second, we describe the methodology how this study was performed. Third, we briefly discuss the psychological foundations of stereotypes used in service research. Fourth, we provide an overview of the reviewed literature based on a categorisation and aggregation of the extant studies. Fifth, we discuss the managerial implications that were provided in existing service research on stereotypes. Finally, we discuss the results, put forward a detailed agenda for future research, and address the limitations of our study.

2. The relevance of stereotypes in services

2.1. The susceptibility of service encounters to being affected by stereotypes

Research shows that stereotypes are more likely to be used when limited information on the person we are in-

teracting with is available (Singletary and Hebl 2009). Thus, the interaction with unknown frontline employees creates situations in which customers are tempted to apply stereotypes. Additionally, due to the distinctive service characteristics of intangibility and heterogeneity (Sasser et al. 1978), services are more difficult to evaluate than manufactured goods, leading to a higher perception of risk throughout the purchasing process (Bebko 2000; Murray and Schlacter 1990). To reduce this uncertainty, customers make assumptions about the service they will receive by looking for extrinsic clues that are accessible during the service encounter (Thakor et al. 2008). Examples for such extrinsic clues are the price of a service (Zeithaml 1988), or the tangible environment of the service delivery (Reimer and Kuehn 2005).

Because the quality of services depends largely on the interaction between the customer and the employee, probably the most important extrinsic clue regarding service quality is the person providing the service (Koernig and Page 2002; Mai and Hoffmann 2011), specifically his or her appearance, language, race, gender or age. Based on these extrinsic clues, customers make inferences about the skills that the employee might possess and intuitively judge whether the inferred traits match the skills required for the service they are expecting to receive. For example, an obese person might trigger perceptions of laziness and less discipline, but also of a jolly, amiable character. An obese person might hence be considered as less suitable for professions in which discipline is needed and more suitable for professions in which friendliness is needed (Cowart and Brady 2014).

2.2. The consequences of stereotypes for individuals, organisations and society

The second reason for the importance of stereotypes in the service context are the potential consequences for individuals, organisations and society that can occur due to stereotyping. On the individual level, research identified service industries such as education and healthcare as well as professional and government services that can heavily affect the well-being of individuals if service delivery is negatively influenced by stereotypes. For example, in an educational context, ethnic minority pupils are evaluated more negatively using subjective assessment measures as compared to objective measures (Burgess and Greaves 2013).

On the organisational level, since frontline employees are often the customer's sole link to the service company, customers do not differentiate between the service provider and the service experience (Bitner 1990). That is, for the customer, "the salesperson is the company" (Crosby et al. 1990, p. 68). Thus, a negative attitude toward a stereotyped employee is likely to be projected onto the service

company (Cowart and Brady 2014). Additionally, stereotypes are not limited to perceptions of individuals. Entire organisations and professions are stereotyped as well. For example, service professions such as garbage man, exotic dancer and bill collector are perceived as "dirty work" (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999). Organisations must be aware of the existence of such stereotypes because they influence the expectations of potential employees (Homburg et al. 2011; Swinyard 1981) and customers (Guo and Main 2012).

Stereotype effects may even extend to a societal level because the exclusion of stereotyped customer segments from crucial services, such as education and healthcare, can be particularly determinant. Limited access to education for stereotyped groups can cause long-term negative effects in terms of lower employment levels, and the individual outcomes of perceived discrimination can lead to distress and depression, increasing costs in the healthcare sector.

3. Methodology

We conducted an integrative, systematic literature review to synthesize research on the influence of stereotypes in services. This approach allows to review, critique and combine existing literature on a topic, to first generate a state-of-the-art understanding of existing knowledge (Palmatier et al. 2018) and subsequently develop new frameworks and perspectives (Torraco 2005). Employing this systematic method allowed us to not merely summarise existing research but also to provide a coherent and wideranging framework (Booth et al. 2012). This is important since previous research has not systematically synthesized the existing knowledge in the field of stereotypes in services.

To identify relevant academic articles that conceptually and empirically analyse stereotypes in services, we conducted a multi-stage, systematic literature review. The process of selecting the articles for analysis is illustrated in *Fig. 1*. To only include the most reliable insights on the topic, we restricted the search to peer-reviewed journal articles, as academic journals contain the most advanced knowledge in any field (Mustak et al. 2013). As research on stereotypes in general has a long tradition especially in psychology, we decided not to limit the time range for published articles. However, based on the search results, a timeframe between 1981 and 2018 emerged. First, using the search terms "Stereotype", "Stereotyping" and "Stereotypical", the EBSCO/Business Source Ultimate electronic database was screened for relevant academic articles. We chose the EBSCO database because it allows for interdisciplinary searches and is considered to be one of the most comprehensive and widely used search engines. Second, we supplement our research with careful screenings of relevant journals in services, marketing and psychology. Third, the references of the identified articles were scanned to identify further relevant publications. This approach is consistent with previous recommendations (e.g., Cooper 1998) and published literature reviews
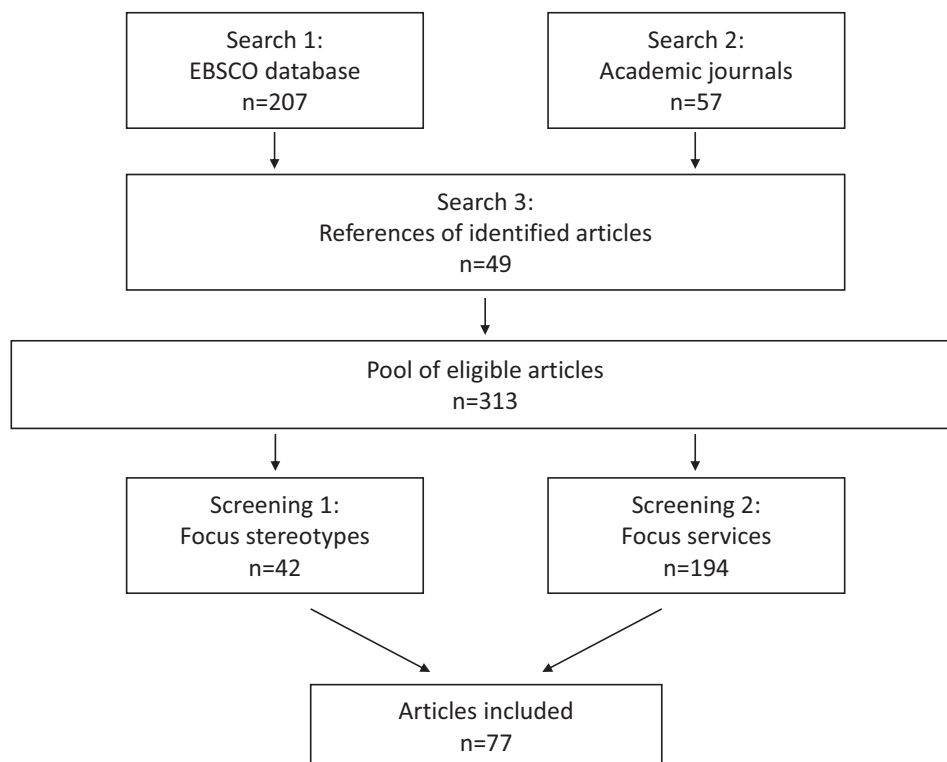

Fig. 1: Literature selecting process

and meta-analyses (e.g., Hogreve and Gremler 2009; Mari and Poggesi 2013).

The three initial process steps aimed at identifying a wide range of articles related to the research topic and thus provided a pool of 313 eligible articles. The next steps in the screening process aimed at excluding non-suitable references. To do so, we conducted an abstract, keywords and full-text screening of the identified articles. To be included in the final sample, articles had to fulfil two main criteria: (1) An explicit focus on stereotypes and (2) a clear focus on services. Ultimately, 77 articles were identified meeting the requirements, and these provided the basis for our literature review.

To analyse the individual articles and synthesise generalizable findings, all articles were coded and structured based on a content analysis. To do so, a list of relevant information to be coded was developed. This list included categories such as general information (e.g., authors, title, journal, year of publication) and content-related categories (e.g., theoretical foundation, service industry, stereotype trigger, type of data collection, dependent variables, managerial implications). Based on the defined categories, each article was screened for the corresponding information and coded. All codings and categorisations were double-checked by a second trained and independent coder, and disagreements were resolved through discussion (Kolbe and Burnett 1991).

4. Theoretical foundation

The following paragraph provides an overview of the most important psychological theories that have been applied in the screened literature to explain the effects of stereotypes in a service context. Interestingly, 40 % of the revised articles do not mention a theoretical foundation as such but derive their reasoning from the definition of stereotypes in general. Stereotypes are knowledge schemas that contain a set of beliefs and expectations about social groups based on observable characteristics (Jussim et al. 1987). They are often automatically activated and strongly influence the judgments we make about people in social interactions (Kunda and Spencer 2003). This simplified understanding of stereotypes, meaning that overgeneralised beliefs about the characteristics and behaviours of certain groups influence interactions with individual members of these groups, is then applied to a specific service context. For example, Arndt and colleagues (2017) reason that tattoos, as visual clues, are associated with more risky behaviour, such as the abuse of alcohol or drugs. These inferences are leading to more negative perceptions of tattooed employees in service professions in which trust is of high importance, such as healthcare.

Other articles, however, are based on established psychological theories, with social-identity-theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986) and highly related theories, such as homophily (Rogers and Bhownik 1971) or the similarity attraction paradigm (Byrne 1971) being the most commonly applied theories. People strongly define their social identity according to their membership in a group. Based on visual or audible characteristics, individuals categorise themselves and others into in-group and out-groups depending on similarities or differences (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Belonging to one of the groups leads to differential attitudes and behaviours, which can be explained by the fact that humans prefer to interact with similar others. This is because interpersonal similarity increases the ease of communication, improves the predictability of behaviour, and fosters relationships of trust (Jones et al. 1998). In contrast, interactions between individuals with dissimilar values, morals and interpersonal norms are more likely to cause conflict (Sharma et al. 2009).

The second most commonly applied theories are the lack-of-fit-model (Heilman 1983) and the complementary role-congruity-theory (Eagly and Karau 2002). According to Heilman (1983), the fit between the perceived requirements for a profession and the perceived characteristics of an individual results in expectations about how well an individual will perform in that job. The role-congruity-theory extends this idea and proposes that society has, on the one hand, beliefs about the attributes typically possessed by members of a social group (e.g., women are affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, gentle). On the other hand, beliefs exist about how to behave when individuals act as part of a social role (e.g., managers should be aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent). If a misfit between a target's possessed attributes and the presumed requirements of a social role is perceived, observers will draw unfavourable inferences independent of the actual qualifications of the target (Eagly and Karau 2002). While both frameworks were originally developed to explain workplace sex bias, they were both applied in different settings such as the influence of conspicuous consumption in the selling process (Scott et al. 2013) or the effect of facial piercing on perceptions of job applicants (McElroy et al. 2014).

While social-identity-theories were mentioned in 29 articles and role-congruity-theory and the lack-of-fit-model in eight articles, all other psychological theories were mentioned only four times or less. Hence, they are not discussed in further detail. An overview of theories that were cited more than once and the corresponding articles that applied these theories can be found in *Tab. 1*.

Theoretical foundation	References	Times cited
Social-identity-theory	Alvarez et al. 2017; Chung-Herrera et al. 2010; DeShields Jr. et al. 1996; Fischer et al. 1997; Gill et al. 2017; Homburg et al. 2011; Hopkins et al. 2005; Luoh and Tsaur 2009; Mai and Hoffmann 2011; Mai and Hoffmann 2014; Moshavi 2004; Pinar et al. 2017; Sharma et al. 2009; Sichtmann and Micevski 2018; Thakor et al. 2008; Wieseke et al. 2012	16
Role-congruity-theory	Gaucher et al. 2011; Moshavi 2004; Rule et al. 2016; Scott et al. 2013; Wu et al. 2016	5
Categorisation theory	DeShields Jr. et al. 1996; Pinar et al. 2017; Rao Hill and Tombs 2011; Wieseke et al. 2012	4
Justification-suppression-model	King and Ahmad 2010; King et al. 2006; Ruggs et al. 2015; Wang et al. 2013	4
Stereotype-content-model (SCM)	Ang et al. 2018; Chattalas et al. 2008; Scott et al. 2013; Wu et al. 2016	4
Discrimination literature	Ainscough and Motley 2000; Ayres and Siegelman 1995; Koernig and Page 2002	3
Expectancy violation theory	Cowart and Lehnert 2018; Gill et al. 2017; Matta and Folkes 2005	3
Homophily	Fischer et al. 1997; Jones et al. 1998; Thakor et al. 2008	3
Similarity attraction paradigm	Pinar et al. 2017; Sharma et al. 2009; Sichtmann and Micevski 2018	3
Stereotype threat	Alvarez et al. 2017; Baker et al. 2008; Lee et al. 2011	3
Lack-of-fit-model	McElroy et al. 2014; Rule et al. 2016	2
Flirtation or flirting theory	Moshavi 2004; Pinar et al. 2017	2
Signaling theory	Cowart and Brady 2014; Rao Hill and Tombs 2011	2

Tab. 1: Theoretical foundation

5. Categorizing and aggregating the literature on stereotypes in services

5.1. General findings

The 77 articles that were the basis for our literature review were derived from 35 journals, with the first article being published in 1981. From 1981 to 2000, 17 articles were published, between 2000 and 2010 24 articles, and between 2010 and 2018 36.

The identified service stereotype research is mainly based on quantitative approaches, such as experimental designs, surveys or real data. 74 % (or 57 articles) of the examined articles fall into this category. Qualitative approaches make up 12 % (9), while mixed approaches account for 5 % (4) and conceptual papers account for 9 % (7) of the articles. This focus on quantitative approaches is not surprising. The sensitive topic of stereotypes is difficult to address via qualitative methods, as a social desirability bias is highly relevant in this context. While the research was conducted in or addressed stereotypes in 21 countries, 59 % (or 47 studies) of the research was related to the U.S. context. The second most investigated context was Australia, which accounted for only 6 % (5) of the investigations. This distribution must be considered when generalising the results because some of the investigated stereotypes may be perceived differently in non-U.S. cultures. The vast majority of papers, with 81 % (62 articles), analysed one specific stereotype as part of their research. 10 %

(8) investigated two, and 6 % (5) investigated three stereotypes simultaneously. The remaining articles (2) discuss stereotypes in general and did not focus on a specific stereotype. This strong focus on one isolated stereotype underscores the previously described fact that existing research is often very specialised and does not allow a generalisation of existing findings beyond the investigated stereotype. The selected papers analysed stereotypes in various industries, such as retail (20 %), hospitality (17 %), professional services (banking/legal) (15 %), healthcare (12 %), utility/household (8 %), education/teaching (5 %), transportation (3 %), entertainment (3 %), B2B (3 %), and telecommunication (3 %).

Beyond these descriptive findings, our review foremost focuses on identifying generalisable insights on four crucial aspects of stereotypical judgements: (1) who uses stereotypes on whom, (2) which stimuli trigger stereotypical judgements, (3) under what contextual situations do these stimuli trigger stereotypes, and (4) what are the consequences of the stereotypes. As mentioned above, the existing literature typically investigates one specific stereotype in a specific context. Our review aims to identify the multiple isolated insights that exist and categorise the individual findings to establish a more generalizable and solid understanding of the mechanisms behind stereotypical judgements in service settings. The findings of this procedure are graphically depicted and structured in *Fig. 2* and will be explained in the following paragraphs.
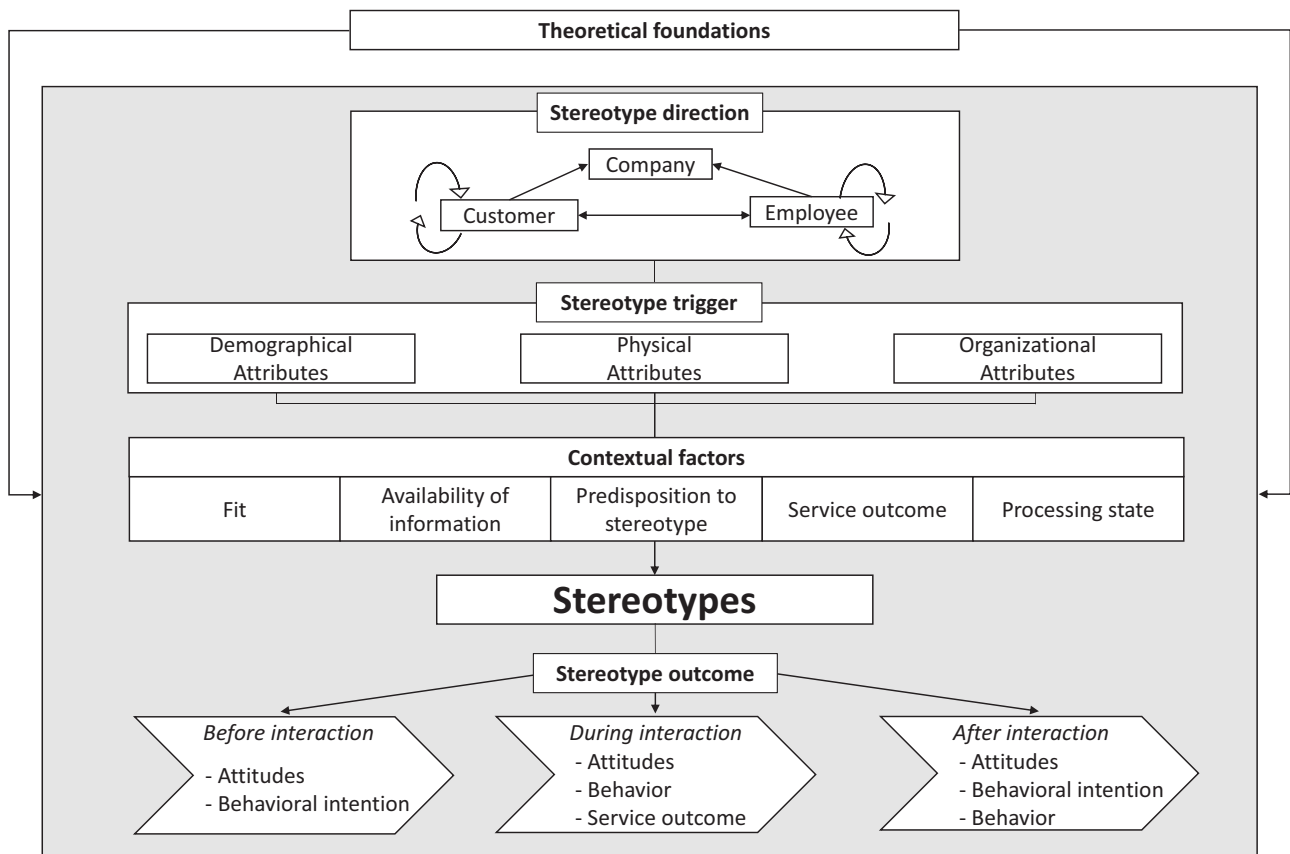
Fig. 2: Framework – Mechanism of stereotypes

5.2. Stereotype direction (who stereotypes and who is stereotyped)

The first analysis to get a better understanding of the influence of stereotypes in services is to investigate the direction of stereotypes, meaning who uses stereotypes about whom within a service context. The service encounter between customer and employee is of crucial importance and therefore yields most stereotypical judgements. Yet additional stereotype constellations exist, such as customers who stereotype other customers or employees who stereotype their own companies. An overview of all identified stereotype directions and the corresponding articles in which they were investigated can be found in the appendix *Tab. A1*.

5.2.1. Customers using stereotypes

Accounting for over 50 % of all investigations, customers stereotyping service employees is by far the most frequent constellation. In addition to this predominating stereotype direction, five other constellations can be identified in which customers use stereotypical inferences. Customers, for example, hold macro-level stereotypes about entire organisations, professions and brands. Such stereotyping occurs because customers form opinions about service companies even before interacting with an individual employee. A well-documented phenomenon in this context

are country-of-origin stereotypes, in which customers draw inferences about expected service quality based on the origin of the service company (Ahmed et al. 2002; Berentzen et al. 2008; Javalgi et al. 2001). Another interesting stereotype constellation influencing customer perceptions is the stereotypical perception of other customers. Thakor and colleagues (2008) found that the age of other customers influenced young customers' attitudes and patronage intentions regarding services for which physical attributes are required, such as river rafting.

Finally, a distinct constellation is based on stereotype threat, the self-stereotyping of customers. Customers know that their counterparts may have negative stereotypes towards them, and this fear of being stereotyped influences subsequent behaviour on the part of the customer (O'Brien and Crandall 2003). Based on this mechanism, it was shown that female consumers who surmise that they are being stereotyped by a male service provider in a male service setting (e.g., automobile repairs) lower their intentions to transact with the provider because they fear unfair treatment (Lee et al. 2011).

5.2.2. Employees using stereotypes

In addition to the customer perspective on stereotyping, another perspective relates to how organisational members (employees, employer, manager) use stereotypes. As

for the customer perspective, the most important constellation relates to the service encounter and addresses how employees stereotype customers (16 % of all investigations). Furthermore, employees were also found to stereotype professions and other employees. For example, male and female frontline service employees have gender-biased stereotypical ideas about what good customer service should look like and adapt service delivery behaviours accordingly (Mathies and Burford 2011). The sales force of an organisation, due to its geographic separation from the headquarters, can develop a stereotypical view on colleagues, perceiving them as working comfortably in their offices without knowing what is really going on in the industry (Homburg et al. 2011; Wieseke et al. 2012).

Finally, self-stereotyping was identified having similar negative effects for employees as for customers. However, employees do not self-stereotype because of their personal characteristics (e.g., gender, race) but because they transfer an organisational stereotype onto themselves. Instead, they believe to carry the focal negative attributes that are associated with their stereotypical profession (Mikolon et al. 2016).

To summarise the findings regarding the direction of stereotypes, it can be stated that not only the direct interaction during the service encounter is influenced by stereotypes, but several other stereotype constellations exist. Even though these additional constellations may be less frequent in real life, future research should move away from investigating primarily customers stereotyping employees.

5.3. Stereotype triggers

One crucial aspect of stereotype research is to identify which external clues can trigger stereotypes. Existing research has found that stereotypes are hierarchical in nature and that people hold stereotypes at different levels (Babin et al. 1995). Common stereotypes include gender or race while more specific stereotypes, even about eco-friendly consumption, exist (Brough et al. 2016). This diversity of stereotypical judgments led to a huge variety of stereotype triggers that have been analysed within a service context. The next paragraph provides an overview of the external clues that have been identified as causing stereotypical inferences. We additionally categorise the stereotype triggers into three categories to make the existing complexity more manageable. An overview of all identified stereotype triggers and the corresponding articles in which they were investigated can be found in *Tab. 2*. To provide our overview, we first identified and coded 25 stereotype triggers (e.g., age, clothing, profession) within the reviewed literature. Second, the coded stereotype triggers were categorised into three groups (1) socio-demographic attributes, (2) physical attributes and (3) organisa-

tional attributes. This categorisation into three groups is based on the distinct origins of stereotype triggers. Socio-demographic attributes, such as gender and race, are stable and cannot be influenced by the individual. Thus, the origins of the stereotype trigger are beyond the control of the individual. In contrast, physical attributes, such as tattoos or bodyweight, can be influenced by the individual. Therefore, the origins of the stereotype trigger are perceived to be within the responsibility of the individual. Finally, while the origins of the stereotype triggers in the first two categories are based on the individual and "private" characteristics of a person, stereotype triggers exist that are based on non-private factors, such as the profession someone is working in.

5.3.1. Socio-demographic attributes

Socio-demographic attributes refer to the sociological and demographic characteristics of an individual that are relatively stable. They cannot be influenced by the individual and are often used to describe individuals statistically. Within this category and overall, the most visible external clues race (30 % of all investigations) and gender (22 % of all investigations) are also the most investigated stereotypes. Other socio-demographics such as age (3 %), religion (3 %), or social class (1 %) only account for a small portion of existing research.

Even though race, ethnicity and culture are different from one another, we consider them sufficiently similar to group them into one category for the purposes of this research. Additionally, we include research on the influence of language and accent stereotypes in this same paragraph. This is because language and accents are mainly clues for the geographic origin of a person and consequently trigger the same cultural stereotypes as visual clues such as skin colour.

In general, results indicate that dissimilarity (e.g., cultural or racial dissimilarity) negatively impacts service interactions (Ang et al. 2018; Cowart and Lehnert 2018). For example, black customers waited significantly longer for service (Ainscough and Motley 2000) or were offered higher prices during new car sales (Ayres and Siegelman 1995). Regarding the effect of language, a salesperson with a standard accent is perceived more favourably than a foreign-accented salesperson (DeShields et al. 1996). Existing research also identified more complex operating principles for stereotypes in a cultural context. For example, based on previous negative experiences, minority customers evaluate service failure incidents more severely when no other minority customers are present. They assume that the negative outcome occurred because of stereotypical prejudice (Baker et al. 2008). In line with the previously mentioned hierarchical nature of stereotypes, stereotypes do not only apply to cultures at each end of the diversity

Trigger Category	Stereotype trigger	References	Times cited (Percent)
Socio-Demographic	• Gender	Ainscough and Motley 2000; Ayres and Siegelman 1995; Chung-Herrera et al. 2010; Cowart and Darke 2014; Fischer et al. 1997; Gaucher et al. 2011; Hekman et al. 2010; Jones et al. 1998; Kim et al. 2017; Lee et al. 2011; Mathies and Burford 2011; Matta and Folkes 2005; Mohr and Henson 1996; Moshavi 2004; Otnes and McGrath 2001; Pinar et al. 2017; Snipes et al. 2006; Stafford 1998; Touzani et al. 2016; Wu et al. 2016	20 (22)
	• Race	Ainscough and Motley 2000; Ayres and Siegelman 1995; Baker et al. 2008; Briggs et al. 2010; Burgess and Greaves 2013; Chung-Herrera et al. 2010; Cowart and Lehnert 2018; Gill et al. 2017; Hekman et al. 2010; Jones et al. 1998; Kim et al. 2017; McGee and Spiro 1991; Wu et al. 2016	13 (14)
	• Culture	Ang et al. 2018; Harris and Russell-Bennett 2015; Hopkins et al. 2005; Poddar et al. 2015; Sharma et al. 2009; Sichtmann and Micevski 2018; Weiermair 2000	7 (8)
	• Language	Alvarez et al. 2017; Zolfagharian et al. 2017; Zolfagharian et al. 2018	3 (3)
	• Accent	DeShields et al. 1996; Mai and Hoffmann 2011; Mai and Hoffmann 2014; Rao Hill and Tombs 2011; Wang et al. 2013	5 (5)
	• Age	Chung-Herrera et al. 2010; Cowart and Darke 2014; Thakor et al. 2008	3 (3)
	• Religion	King and Ahmad 2010; Summers et al. 2018; Touzani et al. 2016	3 (3)
	• Social class	Mikolon et al. 2016	1 (1)
	• Sexual orientation	Rule et al. 2016	1 (1)
Physical	• Obesity	Cowart and Brady 2014; King et al. 2006; Ruggs et al. 2015; Zemanek Jr. et al. 1998	4 (4)
	• Attractiveness	DeShields Jr. et al. 1996; Koernig and Page 2002; Luoh and Tsaur 2009; Wan and Wyer Jr. 2015	4 (4)
	• Clothing	Shao et al. 2004; Ainscough and Motley 2000; Kim et al. 2017	3 (3)
	• Conspicuous consumption	Mende et al. 2018; Scott et al. 2013	2 (2)
	• Tattoos	Arndt et al. 2017; Dean 2010	2 (2)
	• Piercing	McElroy et al. 2014	1 (1)
	• Non-verbal clues	Sundaram and Webster 2000	1 (1)
Organisational	• Salesperson	Babin et al. 1995; Guo and Main 2012; Jones et al. 1998; Stafford et al. 1995; Touzani et al. 2016	5 (5)
	• Retailing	Swinyard 1981	1 (1)
	• Dirty work	Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Ashforth et al. 2007	2 (2)
	• Headquarter stereotypes	Homburg et al. 2011; Wieseke et al. 2012	2 (2)
	• Brand affiliation	Wentzel 2009	1 (1)
	• Country-of-origin	Ahmed et al. 2002; Berentzen et al. 2008; Chattalas et al. 2008; Harrison-Walker 1995; Javalgi et al. 2001; McGee and Spiro 1991; Pecotich et al. 1996; Poddar et al. 2015; Thelen et al. 2010	9 (10)
Total			93 (100)

Tab. 2: Stereotype trigger

spectrum (East vs. West). More finely grained intra-cluster variations, for example, within the Anglo-cultural cluster (Britons vs. Australians) exist (Harris and Russell-Bennett 2015).

The second well-researched socio-demographic characteristic is gender. In this context, very general findings suggest that judgments are influenced by gender biases. Customers tend to be less satisfied with services provided by women, even when objective indicators of performance were controlled for (Hekman et al. 2010; Snipes et al. 2006). However, other findings indicate that customers are equally satisfied with male and female customer service representatives but are more satisfied with employees of the opposite gender (Moshavi 2004). Another angle on gender stereotypes is provided by Matta and Folkes (2005). They show that customers have negative stereotypes and lower expectations toward women in certain professions (e.g., financial industry). Yet, if female employees perform more positively than expected, they are evaluated even higher than a male employee who performs just as well. These diverging results indicate that the underlying mechanisms of stereotyping are complex and that contextual influence factors seem to play a significant role because gender does not have a simple deterministic influence.

As mentioned above, other socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, religion, sexual orientation and social class, received surprisingly little attention and are therefore not discussed in further detail. This exclusion is mainly due to the fact that one objective of our research is to provide generalisable insights on stereotypes beyond a specific contextual stereotype. The limited research on the mentioned stereotypes, however, does not allow for generalisable insights beyond the actual findings of each paper.

5.3.2. Physical attributes

The second group of stereotype triggers are "physical" stereotypes. Compared to sociodemographic characteristics, physical stereotypes are less rigid, including characteristics such as bodyweight or self-selected features such as piercings, tattoos and clothing. Due to the attribution that an individual is self-responsible for the reason for being stereotyped, the related stereotypical judgements may even be more powerful and more often applied. The individual responsibility of the stereotyped person is seen as a justification for the discriminatory behaviour (King et al. 2006). In this context, obese persons are often perceived to be entirely responsible for their condition, and research has found that obese shoppers faced more interpersonal discrimination (King et al. 2006). Also, obese service employees are rated more negatively than their normal weight colleagues (Zemanek et al. 1998).

Based on the "what is beautiful is good" stereotype, it was shown that purchase intentions are more favourable with attractive salespersons (DeShields et al. 1996) and service quality perceptions were enhanced with attractive waiters (Luoh and Tsaur 2009). However, as for gender research, more complex patterns with partially contradicting findings exist. For services that are related to beauty (e.g., hairdresser), more attractive service providers increased evaluations of trust, expertise and quality. Yet for services that are unrelated to beauty (e.g., dentist), moderately attractive providers maximized customer perceptions (Koernig and Page 2002). Again, these contradictory findings indicate that the influence of stereotypes is more complicated than commonly assumed since contextual factors are highly influential.

Another visual clue that is used for stereotypical inferences is the attire of customers or employees. In this context, it was found that from an employee perspective, restaurant customers in business attire are perceived as better tippers and are therefore targeted with better treatment than customers in casual attire (Kim et al. 2017). From a customer perspective, appropriate (vs. inappropriate) dress of employees resulted in higher service quality expectations and purchase intentions (Shao et al. 2004).

The last group of physical characteristics that has been analysed is tattoos and piercings. As one might expect, both characteristics lead to more critical evaluations in terms of perceived suitability for several jobs (Dean 2010; McElroy et al. 2014). Interestingly, in the context of tattoos, an identified hiring bias was not based on negative stereotypes of the employer regarding applicant qualifications. Instead, employers assumed that customers might have negative stereotypes and took this assumption already into consideration (Arndt et al. 2017).

5.3.3. Organisational attributes

The first two categories of stereotype triggers originate in the individual "private" characteristics of a person (e.g., gender or tattoos). While these characteristics are unrelated to professional performance, they are still used to make inferences about behaviours in a professional service context. In contrast, the last category of stereotype triggers originates in a professional context, such as the profession someone works in or the organisation someone is a part of.

One example is the existence of "dirty work". Dirty work refers to tasks and occupations that are perceived as disgusting, degrading or physically, socially or morally tainted, and this perception of a profession is then projected onto the people working in these jobs (Ashfort and Kreiner 1999). Like dirty work, such occupational stereotypes were also identified regarding retailing as a career and "pushy salespersons", along with subsequently negative

customer attitudes toward employees in these professions (Guo and Main 2012; Stafford et al. 1995; Swinyard 1981).

While culture was previously discussed as a socio-demographic attribute of an individual, cultural perceptions were also analysed on an organisational level. Similar to "Made in …" labels for products, a country-of-origin effect was identified for services. Service companies from a particular country are stereotyped as being better than companies from other countries (Ahmed et al. 2002; Thelen et al. 2010).

Additional organisational stereotypes are, for example, headquarters stereotypes, in which a geographically separated salesforce develops stereotypical perceptions toward headquarters colleagues, who are perceived as not knowing what is happening in the real market (Homburg et al. 2011; Wieseke et al. 2012). Finally, research has found that the behaviours of employees, considered as representative exemplar of a brand's workforce, are used to update brand personality perceptions and can thus influence the company image (Wentzel 2009).

After reviewing the current state of knowledge on stereotype triggers, we learnt that multiple triggers have been identified. However, most research focuses on a few characteristics, especially race and gender, while other triggers are investigated far less thoroughly (e.g., sexual orientation). Furthermore, contradictory findings about the effects of various stereotype triggers have been found, which greatly limits the generalisability of the results.

5.4. Context factors

As suggested previously in this article, results of existing research indicate that the influence of stereotypes is more complicated than often assumed and simplifications such as "what is beautiful is better" could not be proven. The next paragraph summarizes which boundary conditions exist and under what contextual circumstances stereotypical judgments become more or less likely or more or less extreme. An overview of the categories of contextual factors and the corresponding articles in which they were investigated can be found in the *Tab. 3*. Before reviewing the contextual factors discussed in existing research, theoretical research on stereotypes can already explain the existence and importance of contextual influence factors to a certain degree. Stereotypes are not one-dimensional antipathy, with a final negative attitude toward an individual or group. Instead, complex patterns exist so that individuals/groups are simultaneously viewed positively in one respect and negatively in another (Cuddy et al. 2004). Elderly are perceived as limited in their abilities and are therefore judged negatively, but they are also perceived as caring and therefore judged positively regarding another characteristic (Cuddy et al. 2005). This general ambiguity of stereotypes allows a contextual manifestation of stereotypes that can be either

positive or negative. Another theoretical explanation for contextual factors are the lack-of-fit-model (Heilman 1983) and the complementary role-congruity-theory (Eagly and Karau 2002). As previously described, these theories propose that society has, on the one hand, beliefs about attributes typically possessed by members of a social group and on the other hand beliefs about how to behave when individuals act as part of a social role. Only a misfit between a target's possessed attributes and the presumed requirements for a social role will trigger negative judgements.

Based on this process, the first category of context factors for the influence of stereotypes that we identified in existing research is the "fit" between the stereotype trigger and the situation it occurs in. For example, while visible tattoos were perceived as inappropriate on white-collar workers, on blue-collar workers, such a perception was less pronounced (Dean 2010). In an age context, the presence of elderly other customers only affected the service perceptions of younger customers for services that require physical attributes, not for services that require personal expressive attributes (Thakor et al. 2008). Both examples show that tattoos and age do not automatically trigger negative associations. This occurs only when the stereotypical inferences regarding the individual (elderly are less active) do not fit with the requirements of the task (participating in a river rafting trip).

In addition to the ambiguity of stereotypes and the lack-of-fit-model, theoretical research has also shown that stereotypes are more likely to be applied when limited information about the interaction partner exists (Singletary and Hebl 2009). The second category of contextual factors is therefore the availability of information. In a banking context, providing additional information in the form of an independent rating agency was shown to reduce the impact of country-of-origin stereotypes (Berentzen et al. 2008). King and colleagues (2006) not only offered another example that additional information can reduce stereotypes but also offered an explanation of the mechanism behind this. If obese customers provide information on their dieting behaviour, they can enforce or reduce stereotypical judgements because this information is used to justify or reject discrimination. If obese participants informed interaction partners that they are on a diet, they did not face a negative stereotype effect any longer (King et al. 2006). While the previously mentioned examples focus on softening existing negative stereotypes, another strategy is to provide information that triggers positive stereotypes instead. For example, providing information on the likability of obese employees triggers a positive "jolly fat hypothesis" that can counter negative obesity associations (Cowart and Brady 2014).

The third category of context factors is based on a predisposition to stereotype. For example, some individuals feel

a higher degree of belonging to a group they are part of, which triggers stronger reactions toward out-group members and consequently stronger stereotypical judgements (Cowart and Lehnert 2018; Zolfagharian et al. 2018). Other predispositions to stereotype are rooted in learnt cultural norms. Older customers grew up in a tradition where tattoos had negative connotations, and therefore, age can be a contextual factor that can reinforce stereotyping (Dean 2010). While the previous predispositions are related to a specific characteristic (ethnicity or age), other predispositions are independent of specific stereotypes. A lower customer involvement tempts individuals to engage in limited information processing and thereby makes them more susceptible to applying stereotypes in general (Shao et al. 2004; Stafford 1998).

The fourth category of contextual factors that can influence stereotypical judgements is service outcome. Studies have shown that in a positive service experience, stereotypical characteristics do not seem to be influential. In contrast, after a negative service outcome, customers evaluate minority service providers more poorly than traditional ones (Poddar et al. 2015; Wang et al. 2013). Interestingly, in a gender context, Matta and Folks (2005) found that due to lower expectations in the beginning, initially negatively stereotyped service providers who deliver an excellent service outcome are evaluated even higher than standard service employees delivering the same service outcome.

The last category of context factors we identified that either reinforce or attenuate stereotypical judgments relates to the processing state of individuals before an interaction occurs. For example, reminding individuals to provide fair and objective assessments of job candidates reduced otherwise existing biases in the evaluation of minorities (Rule et al. 2016). Similarly, when sales representatives were primed into an empathetic mood, they were less likely to target vulnerable customer segments with inferior service (Cowart and Darke 2014). From a customer's perspective, being primed to accurately process information during a service interaction reduces the likelihood of being influenced by stereotypical persuasion attempts of sales representatives (Guo and Main 2012).

Summarising the findings on contextual influence factors within stereotypical judgements shows that stereotypes do not trigger straightforward negative associations. Simple or generalised assumptions, such as women being seen less favourably than men, are not appropriate because stereotypical judgements are more complex than often assumed. Future research must more precisely consider the context in which stereotypical judgements arise and subsequently influence attitudes or behaviours.

5.5. Stereotype Outcomes

One of the most relevant aspects of stereotype research are the consequences of stereotyping, and therefore, the next paragraph summarises the analysed outcomes of stereotypes. Additionally, we categorise the outcomes along two dimensions: (1) a time dimension (when the outcome occurs) and (2) a response dimension (which specific perception or behaviour occurs as outcome). The consideration of a time dimension is seen as important because the consequences of stereotypes that occur before an interaction even takes place (e.g., initiate an interaction or not) are different from the consequences that occur after an interac-

Context factor	Key Findings	References
Fit	Stereotypes only unfold negative consequences if the stereotypical inferences regarding an individual do not fit with the requirements of a task	Dean 2010; Gill et al. 2017; Harrison-Walker 1995; Koernig and Page 2002; Matta and Folkes 2005; Stafford 1998; Thakor et al. 2008; Wu et al. 2016
Additional information	If additional information is available, individuals are less likely to rely on stereotypes	Ang et al. 2018; Berentzen et al. 2008; Cowart and Brady 2014; Harrison-Walker 1995; King and Ahmad 2010; King et al. 2006; Mende et al. 2018; Rule et al. 2016; Scott et al. 2013; Stafford et al. 1995; Wentzel 2009
Predisposition	Individual characteristics and situational aspects can increase the probability to rely on stereotypical judgements	Cowart and Lehnert 2018; Dean 2010; Hekman et al. 2010; Luoh and Tsaur 2009; Mende et al. 2018; Mikolon et al. 2016; Pecotich et al. 1996; Shao et al. 2004; Stafford 1998; Wan and Wyer Jr. 2015; Zolfagharian et al. 2017; Zolfagharian et al. 2018
Service outcome	The outcome of a service interaction can influence whether stereotypical influences are drawn or not	Gill et al. 2017; Matta and Folkes 2005; Poddar et al. 2015; Sichtmann and Micevski 2018; Wang et al. 2013
Processing	Moods or specific stimuli can change the way information are processed and thus reinforce or attenuate stereotyping	Cowart and Darke 2014; Guo and Main 2012; Rule et al. 2016

Tab. 3: Contextual factors

tion takes place (e.g., quality perceptions). The consideration of a response dimension is seen as important because the attitudinal or emotional responses caused by stereotypes are different from actual behaviours based on stereotypes. An overview of the articles that investigated the different stereotype outcomes can be found in the appendix *Tab. A2*.

5.5.1. Time dimension of stereotype outcomes

Regarding the time dimension of stereotype outcomes, three stages can be identified: outcomes before, during and after a service encounter. Outcomes of stereotyping before an interaction takes place are expectations that customers form about the interaction that is going to happen. For example, country-of-origin stereotypes strongly influence the expectations customers have toward a service provider, even if they have not interacted with the company or any of its employees yet (Ahmed et al. 2002; Thelen et al. 2010). In contrast, outcomes that occur after an interaction takes place include satisfaction ratings with the service or an employee (Ang et al. 2018) or the purchase intentions after a consultation meeting (Guo and Main 2012). In addition to pre- and post-encounter outcomes, which account for 83 % of the investigated outcomes, little research has investigated outcomes that occur during the service interaction, such as smiling, eye contact or friendliness toward the interaction partner.

5.5.2. Response dimension of stereotype outcomes

Next, we summarise existing research on what types of outcomes occur, which are categorised into three outcome groups: (1) attitudes, (2) behavioural intentions, and (3) behaviour. Based on the literal definition of an attitude being "a feeling or opinion about something or someone" (Cambridge Dictionary), we use the term very widely to categorise different service outcomes. The most common attitudes used in the reviewed literature are service quality perceptions and satisfaction with the employee, the company or the service. More specifically, attitudes toward the characteristics of stereotyped individuals were measured, such as trustworthiness, likability, attractiveness, or expertise. Furthermore, emotions such as anxiety (Wan and Wyer 2015) or anger (Baker et al. 2008), which customers are likely to perceive during service interactions, were measured. While attitudes allow us to obtain a better understanding of the feelings and opinions of an individual, they are only an indication of how individuals may react.

To get a better understanding of the behavioural consequences of stereotypes and because most research in the field of stereotypes is conducted in scenario experimental settings, the second-most-investigated category of stereotype outcomes is behavioural intentions. At the customer level, the most important behavioural intentions are purchase and repurchase intentions toward a service provided. Other behaviours that were analysed were willingness to pay (Gill et al. 2017), likelihood to recommend (Baker et al. 2008; Thakor et al. 2008), word-of-mouth (Wu et al. 2016; Zolfagharian et al. 2018), intention to complain (Poddar et al. 2015) and switching to another employee or provider (Zolfagharian et al. 2017). Interestingly, from an organisational perspective, behavioural intentions have been investigated very sparsely. The only behavioural intention on the part of employees toward customers that was identified was the level of service likely to be provided (Kim et al. 2017). Similarly, only few organisational behavioural intentions toward employees were identified, such as hiring intentions (Arndt et al. 2017; Rule et al. 2016) or the likelihood of promotion (King and Ahmad 2010).

While behavioural intentions provide valuable insights into how individuals are likely to act, actual behaviours may still differ. Unfortunately, only a small number of behavioural outcomes has been investigated, which can be categorised into two subgroups. The first subgroup accounts for outcomes related to behaviours during the interaction, including greeting, friendliness and eye contact with interaction partners (King et al. 2006; Ruggs et al. 2015) or persuasive efforts made to sell a product (Cowart and Darke 2014). The second subgroup relates to transaction outcomes and the actual result of the interaction. This includes actual sales figures (Homburg et al. 2011; Wan and Wyer 2015; Wieseke et al. 2012), tips received (Miklon et al. 2016) and the representation of minorities in advertisements (Briggs et al. 2010).

Taken together, we learnt from our review that most investigated outcomes are either pre- or post-purchase outcomes, especially attitudes and intentions. Actual behaviour during a service interaction is far less often investigated. This circumstance is assumed to be rooted in the difficulty of measuring such outcomes because these observations are only possible during field experiments. Even though the difficulty to measure these outcomes is recognised, future research should gather more such insights. This is especially important in the stereotype context. Measures before and after an interaction or intentions and attitudes are likely to be subject to a social desirability bias, which may be particularly strong when investigating stereotypes as compared to other research areas.

6. Managerial implications in existing literature

When investigating the offered managerial implications, surprisingly, only about half of the analysed articles included profound managerial implications. The other half offered limited or no contributions in this area. Examples

of such limited contributions are recommendations that retail managers must consistently stress the importance of providing satisfactory service for members of all demographic groups (Ainscough and Motely 2000). Others limit their implications to advising companies to be aware of the problem that women in management positions from an ethnic minority are judged more negatively as compared to men and performance evaluations should take this into account (Wu et al. 2016). While we accept that some academic journals do not require managerial implications as part of a manuscript, which may explain to some degree the limited focus on managerial insights, we still consider analysing the offered managerial implications in existing research to be important so that future research can include a more practitioner-oriented perspective. Several papers identified valuable insights for managers, employees or customers regarding how to deal with stereotypes in a service context. However, most of these insights are very context specific. Therefore, comparable to the previous paragraphs describing the theoretical aspects of stereotypes, we categorised relevant findings on managerial implications to make them generalisable beyond a specific stereotype setting. An overview of the articles that provided the different managerial implications can be found in *Tab. 4*.

The first category of managerial implications concentrates on the most commonly mentioned recommendation: employee training. Two types of training are recommended based on the direction of stereotypes. For employee facing stereotypes, companies should provide training in the appropriate use of individual defensive tactics when being stereotyped (Pinar et al. 2017; Poddar et al. 2015). This can include trainings on how to create a positive self-perception (Ashfort and Kreiner 1999) or handle special requests and complaints of customers who are predisposed to be negative toward minority employees (Mohr and Henson 1996). For customers facing stereotypes, organisations should strive to create training programs such as sensitivity training (Cowart and Darke 2014) which prevent discrimination based on stereotypical perceptions (King et al. 2006) and provide employees with the skills they need to reduce customers' perception that they may be judged based on their individual characteristics (Rao Hill and Tombs 2011).

The second category of managerial implications focuses on the fact that people often rely on stereotypes when no other information are available. Hence, providing additional information is a promising strategy to reduce stereotype effects. Companies can provide individuating performance-related information (e.g., awards, diplomas or testimonials from clients) that present the employee as a competent member of the company (Dean 2010). Alternatively, they can provide information that triggers a positive stereotype and counteracts harmful associations (Co-

wart and Brady 2014). In the context of a service failure, it is important to thoroughly explain what caused the failure so that customers do not consider stereotypical inferences as relevant to the failure (Baker et al. 2008; Wang et al. 2013).

The third category we identified are matching procedures. First, providers must match their offering with the actual needs of customers, not the stereotypical assumptions that companies have regarding their customers' needs (Otnes and McGrath 2001; Summers et al. 2018). Second, providers must create match situations between stereotypical employees and customer groups that are less likely to negatively judge them. For example, younger people are less likely to judge tattooed employees (Dean 2010), and materialistic customers even value conspicuous consumption of employees (Mende et al. 2018). Third, providers must ascribe potentially stereotyped employees to the tasks that match best their characteristics. While unpleasant tasks such as trouble shooting are often outsourced to international call centres, such interactions cause more negative customer perceptions when the contact employee has a nonstandard accent as compared to a standard accent. In contrast, providing good news represents a better task for nonstandard-accented employees (Wang et al. 2013). However, regarding the matching of customers and employees, Sichtmann and Micevski (2018) state that a customer base is likely to be so diverse that matching employees and customers is almost impossible. Based on this valid objection, they propose a different implication, one that was also raised by other authors and is described in the next category.

The fourth category, a different approach to address stereotypes, recommends focussing on delivering high-quality services and ignoring potential stereotypical perceptions because excellent service delivery can render stereotypes irrelevant. For example, in a cultural context, the country-of-origin of a service employee was not as important as the competence of the employee (Poddar et al. 2015). In a gender context, the most important determinant of customer evaluations was the service outcome, not stereotypical perceptions (Mohr and Henson 1996; Pinar et al. 2017). Therefore, service providers should hire employees who have the highest levels of capability, irrespective of stereotypical characteristics, and focus their resources on creating a service culture that encourages superior performance regardless of their own or their customers' stereotypical characteristics (Mohr and Henson 1996; Sichtmann and Micevski 2018).

The last category we identified is that providers must standardise procedures so that stereotype activation is less likely to arise. Companies can standardise the dress employees must wear (Shao et al. 2004; Sundaram and Webster 2000), the language employees should

Managerial implication	Key findings	References
Training	Companies should provide trainings to help employees to be less affected if stereotyped by customers. Also, they should provide trainings that reduce the probability that employees apply stereotypes towards customers	Ashforth et al. 2007; Baker et al. 2008; Chung-Herrera et al. 2010; Cowart and Brady 2014; Cowart and Darke 2014; Gill et al. 2017; Harris and Russell-Bennett 2015; King and Ahmad 2010; King et al. 2006; Luoh and Tsaur 2009; Mai and Hoffmann 2011; Mai and Hoffmann 2014; Mende et al. 2018; Mikolon et al. 2016; Mohr and Henson 1996; Pinar et al. 2017; Poddar et al. 2015; Rao Hill and Tombs 2011; Ruggs et al. 2015; Scott et al. 2013; Sharma et al. 2009; Sundaram and Webster 2000; Touzani et al. 2016; Zolfagharian et al. 2017; Zolfagharian et al. 2018
Provide information	As individuals mainly rely on stereotypes when no other information is available, providing additional information, for example on the qualification of an employee, can help to reduce stereotypes	Ahmed et al. 2002; Ang et al. 2018; Ashforth et al. 2007; Baker et al. 2008; Berentzen et al. 2008; Cowart and Brady 2014; Dean 2010; Guo and Main 2012; Harrison-Walker 1995; Hekman et al. 2010; Koernig and Page 2002; Ruggs et al. 2015; Snipes et al. 2006; Stafford et al. 1995; Swinyard 1981; Thakor et al. 2008; Wang et al. 2013; Wentzel 2009
Matching	Matching employees with specific task, or specific customers can reduce the likelihood of negative stereotypes to occur	Dean 2010; Gill et al. 2017; Mende et al. 2018; Otnes and McGrath 2001; Pinar et al. 2017; Sichtmann and Micevski 2018; Summers et al. 2018; Sundaram and Webster 2000; Wang et al. 2013
Service quality	Excellent service delivery can render stereotypes irrelevant as customers are highly satisfied irrespective of employee characteristics	Jones et al. 1998; Mohr and Henson 1996; Pinar et al. 2017; Poddar et al. 2015; Sichtmann and Micevski 2018; Snipes et al. 2006
Standardizing	Some negative stereotypical inferences can be avoided by standardizing processes, such as clothing or language	Hekman et al. 2010; Mende et al. 2018; Shao et al. 2004; Sundaram and Webster 2000; Zolfagharian et al. 2017

Tab. 4: Managerial implications

select to address customers (Zolfagharian et al. 2017) or the way in which customer feedback is gathered to minimise the influence of stereotyped answers (Hekman et al. 2010).

The review of managerial implications in existing research on stereotypes shows that although stereotypes are socially learned, automatic and subconscious inferences, the negative consequences of stereotypical judgements can be mitigated and managed. Therefore, even as stereotypes are difficult to change, we propose that a stronger focus on measures to reduce stereotypical judgments can make a difference in the long run and thus should be included in future research.

7. Implications and future research

Our literature review on the influence of stereotypes in services has shown that while the existing research has gathered substantial knowledge in this field, some areas are still underrepresented. For instance, while stereotypes are a phenomenon rooted in psychology, many service-related articles do not have a solid foundation in psychological theories. Even as the working principles of stereotypes are very intuitive, future service research should focus on theoretical foundations of stereotypes that exist in psychology literature.

Regarding the direction of stereotypes, a strong focus on customers stereotyping employees can be identified (over 50 % of all investigations). Nevertheless, several other constellations exist which require further investigation. For example, during a service encounter, employees might just as likely stereotype the customer, yet only 16 % of investigations analyse interactions from this perspective.

Furthermore, due to technological developments, a new type of stereotype direction might arise in which technology stereotypes both employees and customers. While technology and algorithms are often considered as rational decision makers and are therefore seen as unbiased, this might not always be the case. For example, 45 % of the ImageNet database for computer vision learning is composed of images from the United States. China and India combined only contribute 3 % of the images, even though these two countries make up 36 % of the world's population, while the U.S. accounts for only 4 %. A consequence of this lack of geodiversity is that computer vision algorithms reliably identified traditional U.S. brides, while Indian brides were often labelled as "performance art" and "costume" (Zou and Schiebinger 2018). Thus,

even technology can become biased and thereby stereotype humans.

Regarding stimuli that trigger stereotypes, some characteristics such as gender and race were analysed in detail, while others such as age or sexual orientation were investigated far less. This imbalance should be addressed by future research. Furthermore, as stereotypes can be based on very specific characteristics, more subtle factors could be investigated, such as marital status, parenthood, body height or the type of brand someone uses. Additionally, societal changes can create new stereotype triggers. Examples would be novel social groups, such as "hipsters" or "vegans". Taken together, future research should account for the imbalanced focus on some stereotype directions and stereotype triggers by investigating a wider variety of stereotype constellations. In this context, also newly arising stereotype phenomena should be investigated.

Another conclusion that can be derived from the review of literature is a heterogeneity of results. Interestingly, even the investigation of commonly accepted stereotypes yielded surprising results. While some studies proved the "what is beautiful is good" stereotype or a "gender fit" stereotype for specific professions, other studies provided no or contradictory findings (Fischer et al. 1997; Koernig and Page 2002; Mohr and Henson 1996). These findings indicate that stereotypes do not trigger straightforward negative or positive associations, because stereotypical inferences are more complex. Therefore, future research must more precisely consider the contextual aspects under which stereotypical judgements arise. Derived from existing findings on the influence of information processing on stereotype usage, the involvement in the service or hedonic vs. utilitarian consumption might be investigated as contextual factors that influence information processing.

Consequences of stereotypes are one of the most relevant aspects in stereotype research. Existing research provides valuable insight for many outcomes of stereotypes, yet we identified areas where future research is needed to provide additional insights. For example, while the behaviour intentions of customers are commonly investigated, only limited research exists on behaviour intentions of employees towards customers. Only one paper within our sample investigated how employees adapt their behaviour due to stereotypical perceptions.

Another under-researched area is the outcome of stereotypes on the individual being stereotyped. Existing research focuses on business outcomes based on the perception of the individual using the stereotype. Such outcomes are quality and satisfaction perceptions, willingness to purchase or attitudes towards the interaction partner. The perspective of the individual being stereotyped was hardly examined, even though the perceptions of stereotyped employees are likely to have an impact on the service encounter itself and other organisational outcomes (e.g., employee satisfaction, motivation).

Finally, the investigation of stereotype outcomes is particularly complicated. The sensitivity to stereotypical judgments increases the likelihood that measures of stereotype outcomes are influenced by a social desirability bias. In

Theme	Research questions
Theoretical foundation	• What theoretical foundations exist in psychology research that can be translated to the service context to explain the identified effects of stereotypes in service interactions? • How can the identified effects of stereotypes in service interactions be explained using the theoretical foundations of service research (e.g., how do stereotypes influence service quality dimensions)?
Stereotype direction	• How do stereotype directions beyond the customer-employee interaction (e.g., customers stereotyping other customers) influence service encounters? • What new stereotype directions might arise that can have an influence on service interactions (technology or algorithms that stereotype customers/employees)?
Stereotype trigger	• What finer-grained stereotype triggers exist that can cause stereotypical judgments within service interactions (e.g., family status, height)? • What new stereotype triggers might arise because of social and technological changes (e.g., food consumption, technology usage)?
Contextual factors	• Under what circumstances can commonly accepted stereotypes be debunked? • What other contextual influence factors exist that make stereotyping more or less likely or more or less extreme (e.g., cultural differences, involvement, utilitarian vs. hedonic consumption)?
Stereotype outcomes	• What effects do stereotypes have on the individual being stereotyped (e.g., employee satisfaction, customer emotions)? • What effects do stereotypes have during a service interaction (e.g., limited willingness to coproduce, reduced involvement)?

Tab. 5: Directions for future research

contrast to an honest opinion, a "politically correct" answer exists, which participants are likely to give to appear more egalitarian (Jones et al. 1998). Especially the most commonly applied approaches to measure stereotype outcomes such as questionnaires before or after an interaction and the measurement of intentions allow subjects to systematically alter their responses (Ainscough and Motely 2000). In contrast, measures during an interaction or measures of actual behaviour are better suited to provide unbiased results as they do not allow participants to adapt their responses to a stereotypical stimulus.

Stereotypes are deeply rooted inferences that are based on necessary mental processes to deal with the complexity of environmental clues (Homburg et al. 2011; Shao et al. 2004). Consequently, stereotypes are very difficult to change, and as a result, providing practicable managerial implications is more difficult as compared to other service research areas. Therefore, creating awareness of a stereotypical perception without giving managerial implications, as it was done in many papers, is already considered to be a valuable insight. Nevertheless, as our review has shown, the influence of stereotypes can be addressed. Thus, future research should not ignore more practical managerial implications, even though they might only be effective over a longer period of time.

8. Limitations of the study and conclusion

Like for all research, we acknowledge that various limitations are associated with this study. First limitations are related to the literature screening process. Due to the choice of keywords, studies that investigated related key words such as prejudices or stigma might have been over-looked. Yet, as we manually reviewed the reference lists of our initial articles, we are confident that we included the most relevant research in the field. Based on the restriction on peer-reviewed journals published in English, publications in books, conference papers or dissertations were missed. Another shortcoming of the paper is based on the necessity to compress the findings of 77 articles into the space permitted for a single one. Due to this requirement, interesting insights had to be waived, such as a discussion of the different service industries in which stereotypes were investigated. One more weakness is based on the explicit focus on traditional service professions. Following the service dominant logic, the distinction between products and services is becoming more and more blurry. A wider range of articles could have been included in the analysis if the term services was interpreted in a more progressive way. The last limitation is the conceptual nature of the article. While this approach allows us to identify and discuss contradictory findings, such as gender stereotypes that sometimes have a positive, sometimes a negative and sometimes no effect at all, it does not allow us to provide definitive answers. Conducting a meta-analysis would be a promising idea to empirically test whether significant effect for common stereotypes exist.

The aim of this article was a synthesis of research on the influence of stereotypes in services. In particular, we aimed at making existing research, which is often highly specialised on a specific stereotype in a specific context, more generalisable and summarizing the crucial aspects that must be considered when conducting meaningful research in this field. With our study, we hope to provide a structured starting point for future research that motivates further investigation in this interesting and highly relevant field.

Appendix

Stereotype direction	References	Times cited (Percent)
Customers stereotype employees	Alvarez et al. 2017; Ang et al. 2018; Arndt et al. 2017; Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Ashforth et al. 2007; Babin et al. 1995; Cowart and Brady 2014; Cowart and Lehnert 2018; Dean 2010; DeShields et al. 1996; Fischer et al. 1997; Gill et al. 2017; Guo and Main 2012; Harrison-Walker 1995; Hekman et al. 2010; Hopkins et al. 2005; Jones et al. 1998; Koernig and Page 2002; Luoh and Tsaur 2009; Mai and Hoffmann 2011; Mai and Hoffmann 2014; Matta and Folkes 2005; McGee and Spiro 1991; Mende et al. 2018; Mikolon et al. 2016; Mohr and Henson 1996; Moshavi 2004; Pinar et al. 2017; Poddar et al. 2015; Rao Hill and Tombs 2011; Ruggs et al. 2015; Rule et al. 2016; Scott et al. 2013; Shao et al. 2004; Sharma et al. 2009; Sichtmann and Micevski 2018; Snipes et al. 2006; Stafford 1998; Stafford et al. 1995; Sundaram and Webster 2000; Thelen et al. 2010; Touzani et al. 2016; Wan and Wyer Jr. 2015; Wang et al. 2013; Wentzel 2009; Wu et al. 2016; Zemanek Jr. et al. 1998	47 (53)
Customers stereotype customers	Thakor et al. 2008; Mai and Hoffmann 2014	2 (2)
Customers stereotype companies	Ahmad et al. 2002; Berentzen et al. 2008; Chattalas et al. 2008; Javalgi et al. 2001; Pecotich et al. 1996; Weiermair 2000	6 (7)

Tab. A1: Stereotype direction

Customers stereotype professions	Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Ashfort et al. 2007; Gaucher et al. 2011		3 (3)
Customers stereotype brand	Wentzel 2009		1 (1)
Customers stereotype themselves	Alvarez et al. 2017; Baker et al. 2008; Lee et al. 2011		3 (3)
Employees stereotype customers	Ainscough and Motley 2000; Alvarez et al. 2017; Ayres and Siegelman 1995; Burgess and Greaves 2013; Cowart and Darke 2014; Kim et al. 2017; King et al. 2006; Mai and Hoffmann 2014; Roth and Voskort 2014; Ruggs et al. 2015; Sharma et al. 2009; Summers et al. 2018; Zolfagharian et al. 2017; Zolfagharian et al. 2018		14 (16)
Employees stereotype employees	Arndt et al. 2017; King and Ahmad 2010; Mai and Hoffmann 2014; McElroy et al. 2014; Rule et al. 2016		5 (6)
Employees stereotype company	Homburg et al. 2011; Wieseke et al. 2012		2 (2)
Employees stereotype professions	Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Ashforth et al. 2007; Gaucher et al. 2011; Mathies and Burford 2011; Swinyard 1981		5 (6)
Employees stereotype themselves	Mikolon et al. 2016		1 (1)
Total			**89 (100)**

Tab. A1 (continued)

Timing	Outcome	Examples	References	Times cited (Percent)
Before interaction	• Attitude	Competence Intelligence Trustworthiness Responsibility Professionalism	Ahmed et al. 2002; Arndt et al. 2017; Cowart and Lehnert 2018; Dean 2010; Fischer et al. 1997; Gill et al. 2017; Jones et al. 1998; Kim et al. 2017; King and Ahmad 2010; Koernig and Page 2002; Lee et al. 2011; Matta and Folkes 2005; McElroy et al. 2014; Mende et al. 2018; Pecotich et al. 1996; Rule et al. 2016; Scott et al. 2013; Shao et al. 2004; Stafford 1998; Swinyard 1981; Thakor et al. 2008; Thelen et al. 2010; Wan and Wyer Jr. 2015; Weiermair 2000; Wentzel 2009	25 (21)
	• Behavior intention	Purchase intention Willingness to pay Word-of-Mouth Intention to hire Likelihood to help	Ahmed et al. 2002; Arndt et al. 2017; Berentzen et al. 2008; Harrison-Walker 1995; Jones et al. 1998; Kim et al. 2017; King and Ahmad 2010; Koernig and Page 2002; Lee et al. 2011; Mende et al. 2018; Otnes and McGrath 2001; Pecotich et al. 1996; Roth and Voskort 2014; Rule et al. 2016; Scott et al. 2013; Shao et al. 2004; Swinyard 1981; Thakor et al. 2008; Wan and Wyer Jr. 2015	19 (16)
During interaction	• Attitude	Anxiety	Alvarez et al. 2017; King et al. 2006; Lee et al. 2011; Wan and Wyer Jr. 2015	4 (3)
	• Behavior	Service timeliness Greeting Eye contact Helpfulness	Ainscough and Motley 2000; Cowart and Darke 2014; King and Ahmad 2010; King et al. 2006; Otnes and McGrath 2001; Ruggs et al. 2015; Wan and Wyer Jr. 2015	7 (6)
	• Service outcome	Negotiation outcome Teacher assessment Sales figures	Ainscough and Motley 2000; Alvarez et al. 2017; Ayres and Siegelman 1995; Burgess and Greaves 2013; King and Ahmad 2010; Mikolon et al. 2016; Ruggs et al. 2015; Wan and Wyer Jr. 2015; Wieseke et al. 2012	9 (8)

Tab. A2: Stereotype outcomes

After interaction	• Attitude	Competence Trustworthiness Satisfaction Mood Perceived fairness	Ang et al. 2018; Babin et al. 1995; Baker et al. 2008; Burgess and Greaves 2013; Chung-Herrera et al. 2010; Cowart and Brady 2014; Cowart and Lehnert 2018; DeShields Jr. et al. 1996; Gaucher et al. 2011; Gill et al. 2017; Guo and Main 2012; Hekman et al. 2010; Homburg et al. 2011; King et al. 2006; Luoh and Tsaur 2009; Mai and Hoffmann 2011; Matta and Folkes 2005; McGee and Spiro 1991; Mikolon et al. 2016; Mohr and Henson 1996; Moshavi 2004; Pinar et al. 2017; Poddar et al. 2015; Rao Hill and Tombs 2011; Ruggs et al. 2015; Sichtmann and Micevski 2018; Snipes et al. 2006; Stafford et al. 1995; Wan and Wyer Jr. 2015; Wang et al. 2013; Wentzel 2009; Wieseke et al. 2012; Wu et al. 2016; Zemanek Jr. et al. 1998; Zolfagharian et al. 2017; Zolfagharian et al. 2018	36 (30)
	• Behavior intention	Purchase intention Repurchase intention Likelihood to complain Word-of-Mouth	Baker et al. 2008; Cowart and Brady 2014; Cowart and Lehnert 2018; DeShields Jr. et al. 1996; Gill et al. 2017; Guo and Main 2012; Homburg et al. 2011; King et al. 2006; McGee and Spiro 1991; Poddar et al. 2015; Ruggs et al. 2015; Snipes et al. 2006; Stafford et al. 1995; Wan and Wyer Jr. 2015; Wu et al. 2016; Zolfagharian et al. 2017; Zolfagharian et al. 2018	17 (14)
	• Behavior	Adherence to corporate strategy Minorities in advertisements	Homburg et al. 2011; Briggs et al. 2010	2 (2)
Total				**119 (100)**

Tab. A2 (continued)

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