

STEREOTYPES ABOUT DIVERSITY AND MENTAL ILLNESS. AN ITALIAN STUDY ON STIGMATIZING ATTITUDES IN ADOLESCENT POPULATION

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The aim of this study was to explore stereotypes among adolescents by Goffman's social discriminated categories (mental illness, physical handicap, immigrant, eccentric personality) since stigma is one of the most important global problem to solve in mental health. Following the WPA line guide for an anti stigma and discrimination campaign we started a big one in Apulian schools. According to literature evidence we chose an emotional instead of a cognitive approach for describing diversity. Films, books, infographics and media actions were used for six months by 60 mental health professionals.

Methods

Participants (N=1430) responded to the self-administered questionnaire Stigmaquest 1.4 version before (T0) and after (T1) the prevention campaign. They were requested to attribute negative, positive and neutral adjectives to each category.

Results

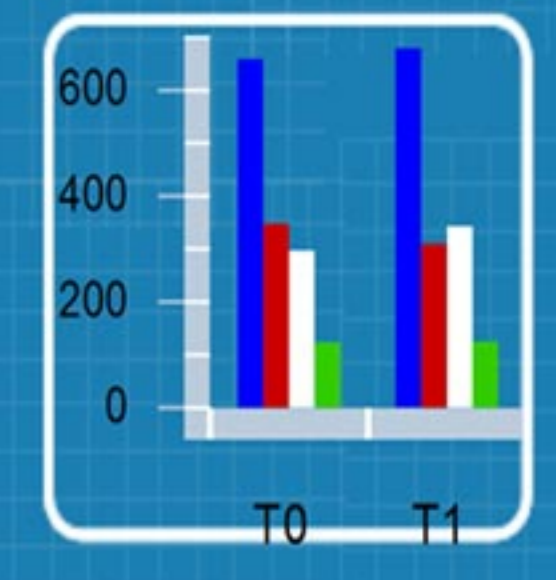
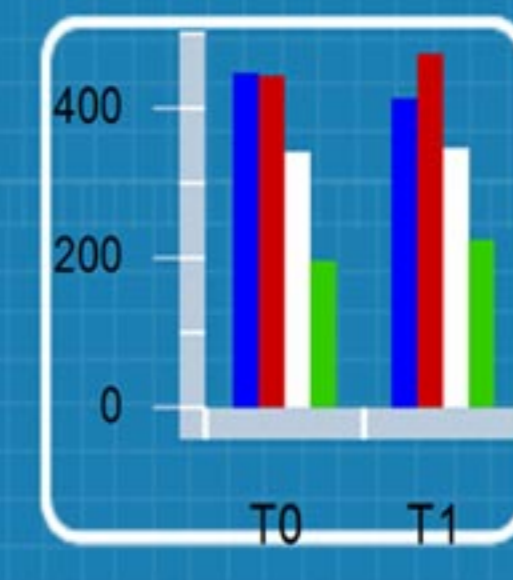
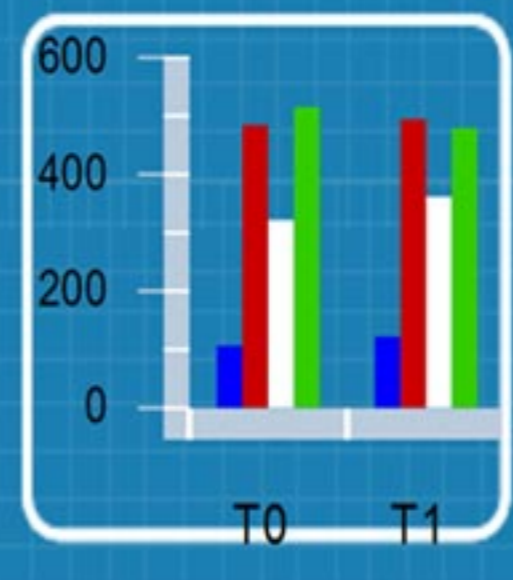
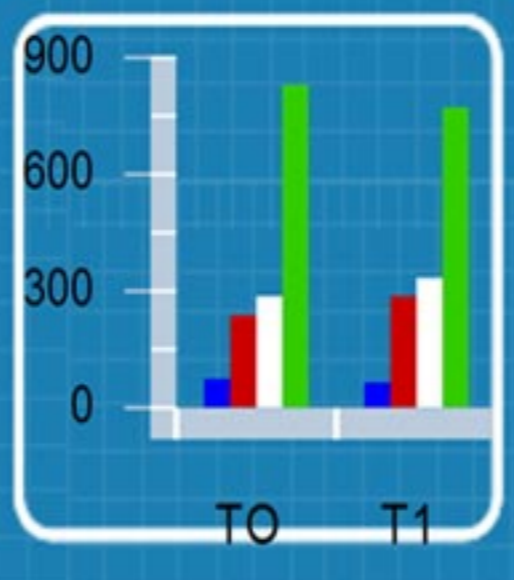
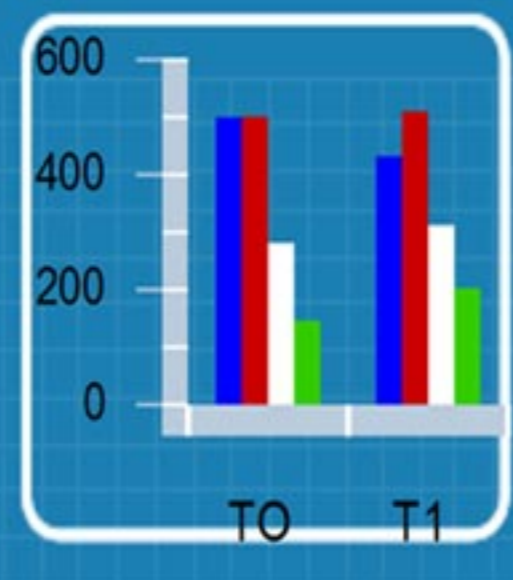
Cluster analysis and chi squared test reveal stereotypical profiles. Differences were found between and within categories. Chi squared analysis of any single adjective preference in the adjectives table of Stigmaquest revealed important evidences. First, a significant difference in positive attribution toward the mental illness at T1: all positive adjectives preferences have increased while negative ones did not. Second, chi squared proved also an evidence for a realistic identification in gender and age of Goffman's categories instead of a projective and idealistic one. Third, mental illness was seen as a particular kind of diversity which does not share adjective attributions with physical diversity (handicap attributions) or cultural diversity one (immigrant attributions).

Conclusions

This study focused mostly on cultural heritage of students. We suppose that the campaign worked very well on adolescent with a starting neutral attribution toward mental illness. We believe that data analysis confirmed that our emotional way to fight stigma is working very well.

ADJECTIVES QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

NEGATIVE ADJECTIVES
NEUTRAL ADJECTIVES
 NO ANSWER
POSITIVE ADJECTIVES



MENTAL ILL EMPLOYED HANDICAP IMMIGRANT ECCENTRIC

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CLUSTER ANALYSIS STEROTYPES

HANDICAP

T0/T1
 FEMALE AND
 OLD
 SOCIABLE

EMPLOYED

T0/T1
 VERY GOOD
 PERSON

MENTAL ILL

T0:
 FEMALE AND OLD
 PERSON WITH A
 NEGATIVE
 SOCIALIZATION
 T1:
 MALE AND YOUNG WITH
 A DIFFICULTY OF
 FRIENDSHIP

T0/T1
 PERSON WITH
 NO SEX OR AGE
 CHARACTERIZAT
 ION ABLE TO
 HAVE LOTS OF
 FRIENDS

ECCENTRIC

IMMIGRANT

T0:
 FEMALE AND OLD
 NOT SOCIABLE
 T1:
 FEMALE AND OLD

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