

“Teen-ageism”: Adolescents’ Internalization, Acceptance, and Behavioral Confirmation of  
Stereotypes About Teens

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this two-part study was to explore adolescents’ negative stereotypes about teens and how such beliefs are linked to psychological maladjustment (Study 1) and behavioral responses (Study 2). Study 1 utilized self-report data to examine relations among the following variables: adolescents’ experiences with age-based discrimination, acceptance and internalization of negative stereotypes about teenagers, perceived prejudice, and psychological maladjustment (non-clinical levels of depression/internalizing behavior, problem behaviors/externalizing behavior, and self-esteem). As predicted, adolescents’ prior experiences with discrimination were linked to both acceptance and internalization of negative stereotypes about teens, psychological maladjustment, and perceived prejudice. Study 2 utilized an experimental paradigm to test a behavioral confirmation effect to determine if the expression of negative beliefs about teens by an adult would have an unfavorable effect on adolescents’ behavior. I found support that exposure to negative expectancies about teens results in the behavioral confirmation of such stereotypes. Now that links between adolescents’ acceptance and internalization of negative stereotypes, psychological maladjustment, and behavior have been found, researchers and educators can begin to devise ways to safeguard against such effects.