

PERCEPTION

- It is cognitive Process .
- Cognition is a basically a bit of information and cognitive processes involve the ways in which the people process the information.

This is similar to the computer processing the information and all computers process the information in the same manner. BUT human beings may differ because of their uniqueness and differences.

People often see a phenomenon differently within the organisation and also outside.

Eg. Manager may perceive strike as a small issue while the unions see it very seriously.so the situation remains the SAME the causes has been assigned differently by different group/people.

So to know why one has to understand **PERCEPTION**

PERCEPTION

Perception is defined as “ a PROCESS of SELECTING, ORGANISING, AND INTERPRETING or ATTACHING MEANINGS to the EVENTS happening in the environment.

Perception correlates integrates and comprehends diverse information from many organs of the body

Perception is also determined by both psychological and physiological characteristics of organism. Perception also takes in consideration of stimulus like shape, colour, smell and form.

Perception is a selective process.

Perception makes the person active because he tries to know the meaning of sensation.

PERCEPTUAL PROCESS

Perception is a process consisting of several sub-processes.

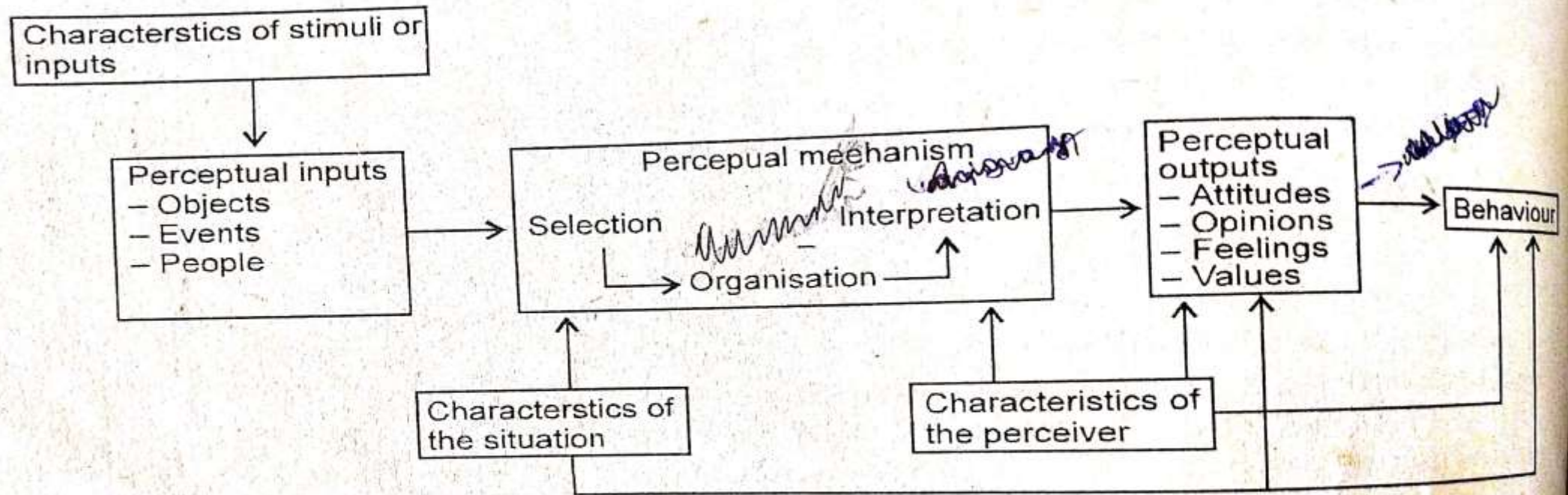


FIGURE 6.2 Complex process of perception

PERCEPTUAL PROCESS

The process consists of THREE sub processes/elements of perception.

They are Perceptual Inputs , Perceptual Mechanism and Perceptual outputs.

❖ Perceptual Inputs: They are basically the various forms of stimuli which are necessary for the occurrence of perception. The stimuli may be in the form of objects, events or people.

❖ Perceptual Mechanism: It involves THREE Elements – Selection of Stimuli, organisation of Stimuli and interpretation of stimuli.

Selection of stimuli: After receiving the stimuli from environment, some are selected for further processing while others are screened out.

There are TWO type of factors which affect the selection of stimuli. They are

- External and related to the stimuli.
- Internal and related to the perceiver.

PERCEPTUAL PROCESS

Organisation of stimuli: After the stimulus are received they are organised in some form in order to make a sense out of it.

The various form of organising the stimuli are – Figure ground principle, perceptual grouping, simplification and closure.

Interpretation of stimuli: After organising the stimuli they have to interpreted by the perceiver so that he can extract some meaning of what is going on in the environment.

People interpret the meaning of what they have selectively perceived and organised in terms of their own assumptions of people, things and situations. Interpretation of stimuli is affected by many factors (Later).

PERCEPTUAL PROCESS

❖ Perceptual Outputs: The outputs may be in the form of covert actions like development of attitudes, opinions, beliefs, impressions etc. The outputs along with other factors affecting human behaviour may result in overt behaviour. For overt behaviour the deciding factor is not the perception alone.

Perceptual Selectivity

Perception is a selective process and people can sense only limited amount of information from the environment. so people are selective. So by being selective certain aspects of stimuli are screened out and others are admitted. Those which are admitted remain in the awareness of people.

Eg. People who read the newspaper , do not read the whole newspaper but they read those news that interest them. This might happen in many cases. This is caused by variety of factors which can be grouped as External and Internal.

The various External factors are: size, intensity, repetition, novelty and familiarity , contrast and motion.

The Internal factors are Self-concept, beliefs, Expectations, Inner-needs, Response Disposition, Response salience and Perceptual Defense.

External factors in Perceptual Selectivity

The various external characteristics may distinguish a particular stimulus from other stimulus in a same group.

1. Size: Size has an important influence in perceptual selectivity. Bigger the size of stimulus higher is the probability that it attracts the attention of perceiver.
2. Intensity: More intense the external stimulus it is more likely to be perceived.
3. Repetition: A repeated external stimulus , more is the attention it gets.
4. Novelty and familiarity: New objects or events in a familiar setting or familiar objects in anew setting draws better attention.
5. Contrast: The external stimulus which stands against the background or people which are not expecting receive more attention.
6. Motion: A moving object draws more attention compared to stationary object.

These factors affect perceptual selectivity , but their use has to be made properly otherwise negative consequences may emerge.

Eg. Louder speaking by manager to his subordinates attracts more attention- sometimes it might lead to irritation.

Internal factors affecting perceptual selectivity

The internal factors refers to individual's complex psychological element. The various factors are Self-concept, beliefs, expectations, inner needs and response disposition.

Self concept: The way the person views the world depends a great on the concept he has about himself. People's own characteristics affect the characteristics which they are likely to see in others. They only select that aspects which they find match with their characteristics.

Beliefs: A person's belief has a grater impact on his perception. So for a person a fact is accepted only based on the belief that he has.

Expectations: Expectations affect what a person perceives. Eg. A Technical Manager may expect more ignorance about technical features of a new product from a non-technical person.

Inner Needs: People's perception is determined by their inner needs. People with different needs usually have different stimuli. So people with different needs select different items to remember or to respond.

Internal factors affecting perceptual selectivity

Response disposition: It refers to a person's tendency to perceive familiar stimuli rather than unfamiliar ones. Eg. A person having a particular value takes less time in recognizing the words having implications related to that value.

Eg. A person having a dominant value towards religion will be able to recognize words like Priest, Bible etc. rather than Cost, price.

Response salience: It is a set of dispositions which are determined not by familiarity of stimulus situations but by a person's own cognitive predispositions.

Eg. A marketing manager may view low sales from a marketing angle and a production manager might view it from a production angle. The reason is because of the background that he is trained in.

Perceptual Defense: It refers to the screening of those elements which create conflict and threatening situations in people.

Perceptual Organisation

People organise the various stimuli on the principle of Figure-ground Principle, Grouping, simplification and closure.

Figure-Ground Principle: People tend to organise information on what is known as Figure-ground principle. This includes a tendency to keep certain an important phenomena as figure and less attention one at the background. The perception might change if the stimuli is changed from figure to ground.

Eg. While reading a book we tend to keep our attention at the letters as figure and paper as ground.

Eg. Performance-Figure and relation with boss- ground

Grouping: There is a tendency to group several stimuli into recognizable pattern. People usually group based on the Proximity or similarity Principle

Proximity: This states that grouping of stimulus which are close to one another. Eg. Employees who re in same department will be grouped together based on the physical proximity. So if the output of the dept. is poor then all the persons of the dept. will be perceived as inefficient.

Perceptual Organisation

Similarity Principle: The principle of similarity states that greater the similarity of the stimuli greater is the tendency to perceive them as a common group. Eg. All workers may be perceived to have same opinion about management because they are grouped together on the basis of similarity.

Simplification: When people are overloaded with information they try to simplify it to make it more meaningful and understandable. The perceiver has eliminated some of the things which are less important.

Closure: When faced with incomplete information, people fill the gaps by themselves to make the information more meaningful.

Eg. Managers will not be having full information to take a crucial decision he often makes certain assumptions and decide accordingly.

Interpersonal Perception

In this topic, emphasis is on interpersonal perception in which the perceiver perceives another person and the latter becomes a stimulus for perception. This is called as Person perception.

Inside the organisation individuals constantly perceive one another.

Eg. Managers perceive workers, superiors perceive subordinates, subordinates perceive superiors.

so the characteristics of perceiver and perceived are important for accurate perception.

Characteristics of perceiver:

- Knowing oneself makes it easier to see others correctly
- One's characteristics affect the characteristics of the person and he is likely to see others in the same way.
- People who accept themselves are more likely to be able to see favourable aspects of people.
- Accuracy of perceiving others.

Interpersonal Perception

Characteristics of perceived:

- The characteristics of person perceived will greatly influence others perception.
- The person being perceived is usually placed in two categories viz: status and role.
- The visible traits of a person perceived will greatly influence others perception.

Perceptual Distortion

Usually the perception may be distorted so the perception may be wrong. This is because of the following factors:

- ❖ Factors in perceiver
- ❖ Factors in perceived
- ❖ Situational factors

Interpersonal Perception

Factors in perceiver:

The following factors influence the perception of perceiver. They are Personality, Mental set, Attribution, first impression, Halo effect and stereotyping.

Personality: The personality of perceiver greatly influences the perception of other persons.

- Secure persons perceive others as warm individuals and not as cold and indifferent people.
- Thoughtful individuals do not perceive situation of 'Black and White' but they understand that there can be different shades.so they do not judge persons based on a single evidence.
- Self accepting people perceive others as linking and accepting them. so those who are not self-accepting tend to distrust others.
- People tend to perceive others more accurately when they are more like others.

So these imply that insecure, thoughtfulness and non-self accepting persons are less likely to perceive themselves and others accurately.

Factors in perceiver

Attribution: It is the process by which individuals interpret events as being caused by particular aspects in the setting around them. They think that their behaviour and others behaviour are caused by some factors of the environment.

These individuals assign the reason for their behaviour is internal which is known as Internal locus of control. While some individuals assign the reason for their behaviour is external which is known as External locus of control.

Attribution of causes for events influence perception.

Factors in perceiver

Eg: If the failure of subordinate is perceived to be caused by external factors on which subordinate has no control, then the manager treat him as capable and trustworthy and not the subordinate. But the subordinate may be treated as ineffective and irresponsible.

Similarly the persons attribute the reasons of their failure to external factors to defend their ego.

Eg: If a person is bypassed in promotion he may attribute the reason of his bypassing and given promotions to others is not because of their ability but because of their closeness with their higher-ups.

Factors in perceiver

First Impression: It is common that people evaluate others on the basis of first impression. The evaluation based on first impression may be correct if it based on adequate and significant evidence. But if it is not so then, it is not true reflection of people being perceived. This can be corrected by frequent interaction ,but it is very difficult to change it.

Halo effect: Halo effect is a process by which the person is perceived on the basis of one trait or event. Halo effect is more reflected in the performance appraisal in organisations ,where distortion occurs because the rater is influenced by rates one or two outstanding performance (good or bad) and he evaluates the entire performance accordingly.

Factors in perceiver

Stereotyping: It occurs when the perceiver perceives a person on the basis of characteristics of the group to which he belongs to. Here the person is not perceived as an individual with specific characteristics but on the basis of the group characteristics. Most of the stereotypes have favourable trait and unfavourable traits.

There are certain stereotypes in international level.

Eg. Chinese are inscrutable, Japanese are industrious, American are ambitious blacks are athletes ,fat men are jolly persons.

Stereotypes also exists in organisational setup. Managers., Supervisors, Workers and Union leaders are perceived on the basis of the characteristics of the class they belong to.

Factors in the person perceived

The factors in the person perceived are

Status: it is the relative ranking in comparison to others. The ranking may be based on one or more of the characteristics like social or organisational position , intelligence and knowledge , amount of wealth etc.

During perception , people are perceived not on the basis of his individual characteristics but based on the status. So person having higher status may be perceived to have many desirable qualities in comparison to others. But most of the tome it may not be true.

Factors in the person perceived

Visibility of traits: visibility of traits also influence person of the perceiver. The traits which are not visible like honesty ,loyalty etc. The closeness among people provides opportunity to perceive the traits correctly which in most time not possible.

Situational factors: Situational factors also affect the perception. There may be structural characteristics of the place indicating the characteristics of the person occupying it. Eg: A person is perceived differently when he meets others in a Five star hotel compared to ordinary place. In these case it may not reflect the true value of the person in this situation.

Managerial applications of perception

- Interpersonal working relationship
- Selection of Employees
- Performance appraisal

Developing Perceptual Skills

- Perceive oneself accurately
- Enhance self-concept
- Having positive attitude
- Being empathic
- Communicate more openly
- Avoid common perceptual distortions