

Organizational Behaviour - an Introduction
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Lecture – 08
Perception - Part 3

Welcome to this lecture series on Organizational Behaviour. This is the third section of the second chapter which is on Perception.



Outline

- Defining Perception
- Basic elements of perception
- Principles of Perceptual Selection
- Perceptual Organization
- Social Perception
- Perceptual Biases
- Implication to HRM



How our perceptions can lead to misunderstanding and conflict



I will quickly summarize what happened in the previous lectures. We defined what is perception and we also try to understand why it is important to understand perception as a concept in the organizational context.



What is perception?

- Process of giving meaning to sensory stimulus through organizing and interpreting.
- It is how we 'see' things.
- Perception is an individual's view of reality.
- It is highly subjective.
- Role of perceptions at work place?

The slide features a red arrow pointing right at the top left, the NPTEL logo at the top right, and a small logo at the bottom left. A video inset in the bottom right corner shows a man with glasses and a blue checkered shirt.

In other words, how will this understanding of perception will help managers to make better decisions.



... THE AVERAGE AMERICAN MALE ...

The cartoon depicts a female professor in a classroom setting, with a blackboard labeled 'ECON 101' behind her. Three male students are seated at desks, each with a different thought bubble above their head. The first student's thought bubble shows a woman with a large bust, the second shows a woman with a large nose, and the third shows a woman with a large head. The cartoon is signed 'CartoonStock.com' and 'Search ID: mcn3880'.

The slide includes a red arrow at the top left, the NPTEL logo at the top right, and a small logo at the bottom left. A video inset in the bottom right corner shows the same man as in the first slide.

So, perception is giving meaning to sensory stimuli and it is very subjective in nature. For example, the same stimuli different people may understand it differently.



Basic elements of perception

- Selection and screening of information
- Organization of stimuli
- Sub-processes of perception
 - Stimulus
 - Registration
 - Interpretation
 - Feedback
 - Consequence (the response)



So, the entire chapter is divided into two major sections; one about the technicalities of sensory perception; two the idea of social perception. So, in the technicalities of perception, we looked at different steps in perception. And in each of those steps, we looked at some of the key theories or key issues in those steps.



Principles of perceptual selection

- How we select the stimulus?
- External and internal factors.
- External factors
 - Intensity
 - Size
 - Contrast
 - Repetition
 - Motion
 - Novelty and familiarity



So, selecting a stimulus depends on two major factors; one internal, two external. So, we looked at what are the internal factors and what are the external factors.

Principles of perceptual selection

- Internal factors
 - Habit
 - Motivation and interest
 - Learning
 - Organizational role and specialization

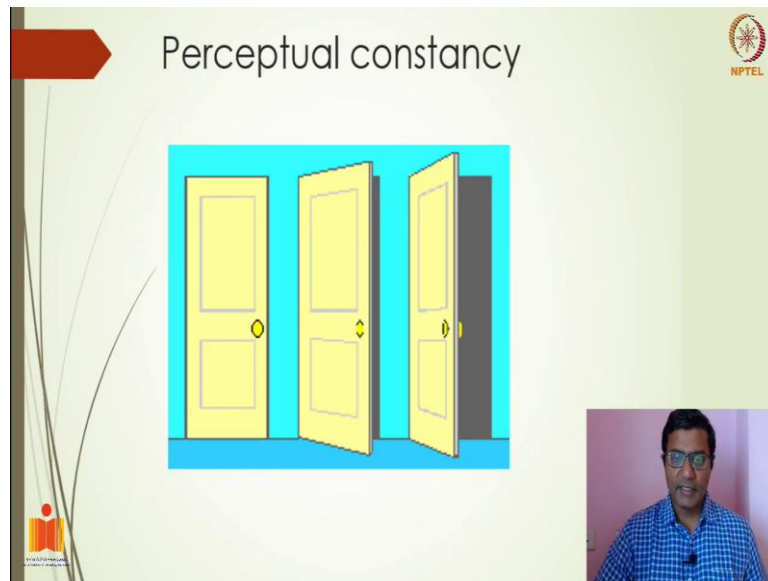
The slide features a light green background with a large, faint number '2' in the center. A red arrow points to the title. Logos for NPTEL and an institution are visible in the corners. A small video inset of a man in a blue checkered shirt is in the bottom right.

Perceptual organization

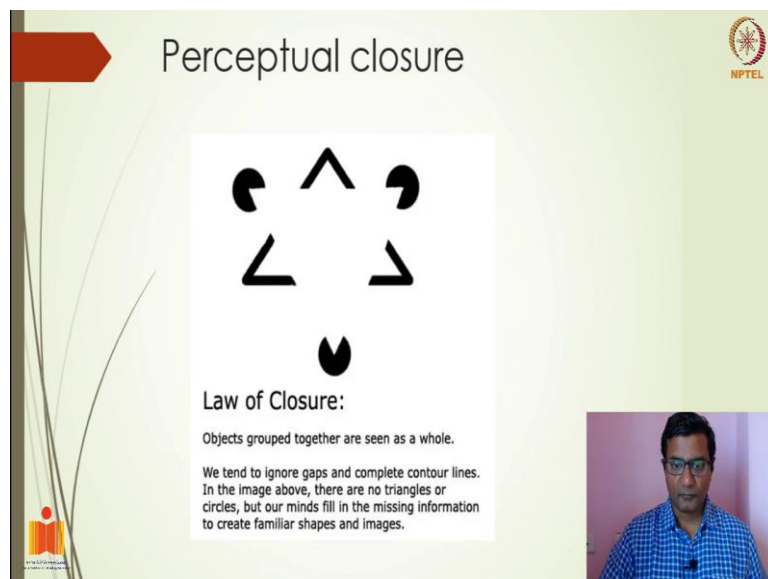
- Grouping
- Closure
- Figure-ground
- Perceptual constancy

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The second step of perception is organizing the selected stimulus. We looked at some of the principles, humans use to organize sensory stimulus. These principles are suggested by Gestalt theories.





So, many of these principles in organizing sensory stimuli applicable is applicable to social perception also. For example, the idea of perceptual constancy which means we tend to see things as constant; we do not perceive change when it happens over a period of time, so which applies to social perception also.



Similarly, the idea of closure; which says we try to fill in the gaps in physical perception which holds true for social perception also. For example, in work place, when the information which we receive is partial, we try to fill in those gaps with our own understanding or our own assumptions of what it would be.

Optical illusions



The slide titled "Optical illusions" features two images. The first image shows a cluster of white dots with a red dot in the center, illustrating a perceptual illusion. The second image shows a woman's profile wearing a ruffled collar, which is a classic example of a perceptual illusion. A small video inset of a man in a blue checkered shirt is visible in the bottom right corner.

So, when problems happen in the way we use these principles of organizing, it can lead to optical illusions.

Social Perception

- The process of combining, integrating and interpreting information about others to gain an accurate understanding of them.
- Attribution: the process through which individuals attempt to determine the causes behind others' behaviour.



The slide titled "Social Perception" contains two bullet points. The first bullet point defines social perception as the process of combining, integrating and interpreting information about others to gain an accurate understanding of them. The second bullet point defines attribution as the process through which individuals attempt to determine the causes behind others' behaviour. A small video inset of a man in a blue checkered shirt is visible in the bottom right corner.

In the previous section we looked at social perception. Social perception means, perception in the social context or perception using social information. So, there are lot of theories and lot of concepts related to social perception, but we are going to look at only two major areas. One – how do we perceive others or how do we understand others; two – how do we understand our own behaviour or how do we attribute cause to our behaviour and others behaviour.

So, I will repeat. Social perception, the first element which we are trying to see is how do we understand ourselves and others or how do we make sense out of others and ours, our

behaviour. Second, when we try to understand behaviour both our behaviour and others behaviour how do we attribute the cause, or what cause do we attribute.



The slide is titled "Social Identity" and features a list of three bullet points. The first bullet point defines personal identity as characteristics that define a particular individual. The second bullet point defines social identity as defining a person in the context of his/her membership in various social groups. The third bullet point defines social identity theory as perceiving ourselves and others based on both our unique characteristics (personal identity) and our membership in various groups (social identity). The slide also includes the NPTEL logo in the top right corner and a small video inset of a speaker in the bottom right corner.


- Personal identity: The characteristics that define a particular individual.
- Social identity: defining a person in the context of his/her membership in various social groups.
- Social identity theory: we perceive ourselves and others based on both our unique characteristics (personal identity) and our membership in various groups (social identity).

So, when we try to understand ourselves and others, we try to understand the identity or who are they or who am I. So, if you remember in the previous lecture, I asked you to do an exercise where I asked you to write five sentences starting with I am. So, the idea here is to see what constitutes your identity, how do you identify yourself. So, in identity, both our own identity and judging others identity, we use two elements; one personal identity and social identity.


Personal identity is personal characteristics using personal characteristics. Social identity is trying to understand someone by understanding their social group or the group in which they belong to. So, social identity theory says we try to establish identity or we try to judge somebody's identity or we try to perceive others identity and even our own identity through characteristics which are related to our own self and also to the social group which we belong to or somebody else belongs ok. So, this is where we stopped.

And one important issue which can happen or problem which can happen because of trying to establish or try to understand someone based on the social group is stereotyping – social stereotyping. So, we will also look at stereotyping in detail in this particular lecture.

The Attribution Process



- Internal Vs External causes
- Kelley's theory of causal attribution:
 - Consensus: the extent to which other people behave in the same manner as the person we are judging.
 - Consistency: how consistently the person exhibits the behaviour in similar context.
 - Distinctiveness: the extent to which a person behaves in the same manner in other contexts.



If you remember in the previous class, I asked you to you know look at internet about this term attribution of causality. So, attribution of causality is like I said earlier when we try to understand other's behaviour, we try to attribute the causes of those behaviour.

For example, if somebody looks very angry ok, you perceive someone to be a very angry person. First thing we will do is why this person is angry because of this person is in by nature, a very irritable angry person or because of external reasons ok. So, we so this holds true for attributing cost to our own behaviour and also others behaviour.

According to Kelley's theory, we use three criteria to check whether some behaviour is attributed to internal cause or external cause. So, these three elements or these three criteria are consensus, consistency and distinctiveness.

So, consensus means whether many people agree to it or whether many people feel the same. Consistency means whether this happens always or consistently. Distinctiveness means, whether this particular behaviour has happened in one situation or in different situations.

So, I will give one example. Let us say in your office you joined a particular workplace newly. And you, your supervisor, you feel is like always irritated at you ok. So, he or she is showing lot of anger and dissatisfaction towards you. You are not sure whether it is because of and you feel you know this person is an irritable person ok. Your perception is this person is an irritable person.

So, you want to know whether your perception or your understanding that this boss is irritable; is it really true or it is just an assumption ok. If it is true means, it was an external reason which is the boss by himself or herself is a bad person or an irritable person. If it is internal, then it means you are imagining or you are assuming that your boss irritable person without any real or external reason ok.

So, consensus everybody feels you over a period of time, you talk to others in your workplace, everybody feels you know that this person is in fact irritable ok. So, then it means, the boss is really irritable which is external reason. So, your assumptions are not just internal. There is a true reason which is external.

And then consistency which means, you consistently feel or have perceived this person to be irritable ok. In many situations, you have felt this person is irritable. So, there are more chances that it is true which is external reason. Distinctiveness means, whether you perceive only this person is irritable or many people as irritable ok.

If you feel all of them in your office is irritable, then it means, probably you know you are imagining ok. If you feel only this person is irritable, distinctively this person is irritable there are more chances that your boss is irritable which is external reason.

So, let us look at the combinations ok. Usually we use combinations of these three criteria to see whether reason is internal or external ok.

The slide is titled "Attribution of Cause" and features the NPTEL logo in the top right corner. It lists three attribution types based on combinations of Consensus, Distinctiveness, and Consistency:

- Low Consensus, Low Distinctiveness, High Consistency = Personal Attribution
- High Consensus, High Distinctiveness, High Consistency = Stimulus Attribution
- High Consensus, Low Distinctiveness, Low Consistency = Circumstance Attribution

A small video inset in the bottom right corner shows a man with glasses and a blue checkered shirt speaking.

So, low consensus – very few people feel or nobody feels the boss is irritable ok and low distinctiveness – you think many people in your office are irritable. High consistency – you have been feeling like this many a times ok, then it means, it is your problem. If you think everybody in the office is irritable it means, maybe your perception or the reason behind it is you the way you look at it as not correct ok.

Vis a Vis high consensus – everybody thinks this boss is irritable and distinctiveness is high which means only this person you feel irritable; distinctiveness means uniqueness; uniquely you feel only this person is irritable. High consistency – always you consider this person boss to be irritable, then it means, maybe it is external which means the stimulus, the boss himself or herself is irritable, ok.

Third, high consensus – many people feel but not all of them I mean low distinctiveness, all of them are irritable and low consistency. Sometimes you feel your boss is irritable, sometimes you feel the boss is good then it means circumstances. Maybe there is something in the situation which triggers this kind of behaviour in your boss or your assumptions ok.

I hope you understood Kelley's attribution theory. So, the basic idea here is we use three criteria, whether many people feel the same, or only I feel like this. I feel like this in all situations or only in certain situations the other person, or you know I see only few people doing it which is distinctive distinctively I feel uniquely I feel only this is this person is like that, or I feel many people are like this, or many situations are like this which is low distinctiveness. So, based on these three combinations, we decide whether something is because of internal reasons or external reasons.

The slide features a title 'Perceptual Biases in Social Perception' in a large, dark font. Below the title, there are three bullet points, each preceded by a red square. The first bullet point is 'Fundamental attribution error: the tendency to attribute other's action to internal causes while largely ignoring external factors.' The second is 'Halo effect: overall impressions of others affecting specific judgments.' The third is 'Team halo effect: the tendency for people to credit teams for their successes but not hold to them accountable for their failures.' In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a small video inset showing a man with glasses and a blue checkered shirt. The slide also includes a red arrow graphic on the left and the NPTEL logo in the top right corner.

- Fundamental attribution error: the tendency to attribute other's action to internal causes while largely ignoring external factors.
- Halo effect: overall impressions of others affecting specific judgments.
- Team halo effect: the tendency for people to credit teams for their successes but not hold to them accountable for their failures.

One important implication of social perception in workplace or one reason why we should understand social perception in workplace is the negative impact of social perception or the perceptual biases which can happen in social context because of social perception. There are many biases, biases mean unbalanced things or one-sided things. So, some of the social biases studied in social psychology context which can be used in organizational behaviour context. I have listed few of them.

The first one is fundamental attribution error which means the same Kelley's attribution theory. So, if you know when we try to judge other's behaviour, most of the times we tend to attribute it to internal cause which means, if somebody behaves in a certain way we assume that it is because you know because they choose to do it ok because it is their own limitation or their own cause.

And we largely ignore external factors. Let us say if somebody has failed ok, somebody did not perform well, so we attribute it to in capability. We say that this person is incapable which is internal factors. And we largely ignore external factors maybe he or she did not get enough resources or support from others. So, we do not actually see it. This was usually in the case of others.

But in our own case, we tend to if we fail we tend to attribute it to external reasons, we will not say that you know I am incapable, we say we give lot of reasons. While on the same time, when others fail, we attributed to in capability which is an internal cause ok.

So, second important perceptual bias which is very common in organizational context is Halo effect. So, what is the Halo? Have you heard of this term Halo? Halo means that you know that light kind of a thing ring which you see in photographs of great leaders or you know deities and things like that or philosophers and things like that.

So, Halo, so what does it signify? Halo signifies worshipping or you know Halo worship or hero worshipping kind of a thing which means we tend to, based on certain impressions we have about someone, we tend to generalize everything under that impression.

For example, if somebody if your teacher is like you like your teacher he or she is your role model, you think you cannot get a better teacher than this ok. And you can never feel that your teacher can falter ok. Or your parent you know you think your parent is the best parent you can get or anybody can get, you will not see their shortcomings, you will see them as you know perfect individuals, so that is what is Halo effect.

So, based on certain qualities which we see in people good qualities, we try to, we tend to neglect some of the other negative aspects of these people ok. This is Halo effect. In workplace context, it is very important because you know we tend to see certain good qualities in people and try to give them good performance evaluation. So, this person might be a honest person, you know he is a very committed person, can be a very humble person, and things like that, but does not mean that his or her performance is good.

But what happens is based on these qualities we try to overrate performance, performance in terms of actual work performance. So, this can lead to impression management techniques which means people try to impress others through these qualities and try to get extra you know points for what they are doing ok. So, this is what we call impression management technique.

Halo, there is also team Halo effect which means teams usually what they do is especially if the teams are supposed to be very good teams, you attribute success to them; and if they fail you attribute it to external reasons ok. For example, let us say you like your cricket team a lot you know CSK - Chennai Super Kings you like them like too much, they are your favourite cricket team.

And you know whenever they succeed, you think they played well. But when they fail, you tell them the umpiring is not good ok. So, this is what is team Halo effect.

Perceptual Biases in Social Perception....

- Similar-to-me effect: perceiving people who are similar to us in positive light.
- Selective perception: the tendency to focus on some aspects of the environment while ignoring others.
- First-impression error

Similar-to-me effect is in workplace context or even in social context, when we perceive others to be similar to us, we tend to look at them in a positive light ok. One example is, in fact, I told you this earlier example you know if you are standing in a queue and two people break the queue, one person is one person speaks the language your mother tongue, other person is different you know regional background, you tend to attribute your, the person who is from your own language background as probably because there is a true reason, but the other person as willingly breaking the queue ok.

So, in fact many research show that when we feel the other person is similar to you, similar to us, we tend to trust them easily ok. Let us say you are going in a train, train journey, long train journey, and the one who sitting next to you is speaking a same language or studied in the same college as you, we tend to talk to them more, you know tend to share our own personal experiences more than to people who are not similar to us ok.

So, again this can be a serious bias because many a times these similarities of superficial similarities. So, we think this person is similar, because the similarities are very obvious, but these obvious similarities may not be true similarity.

For example, let us say first day in your work, we will try to talk to people who talk the same language or maybe same gender. So, we think people like this are trustworthy, may

not necessarily ok. So, we do not explore friendship with other social groups. So, this can be a serious flaw. And this can lead to in group, out group bias. In fact, in one of those examples I gave how our own group we perceive them to be better than others ok.

Selective perception means when we look at or when we receive many information, we choose only certain information and ignore others ok, unconsciously. In fact, this is a very basic idea of perception is not it like we get lot of information in our day to day life, but we do not select all the information, we select only fewer information to make decisions.

But sometimes what can happen is the information which we have not selected or the information which we have ignored can be a very important information. But we think this information may not be useful. So, this is selective perception bias.

First impression error means based on our experiences in the first encounter we make certain judgment and we tend to hold these judgments for a longer period of time. For example, you know you are in your workplace your first experience with your boss is not very positive, it is not very pleasant.

So, you tend to look at the consecutive behaviour of the boss in the same light ok, so that leads to closed you know attitude towards others. It can be positive also you know in the interview somebody tries to impress with the way they greet there, the way they you know conduct themselves and we assume that the person might be highly capable.



You know we use that first impression to judge consecutive behaviour. So, this is one example of Halo effect. You know Obama have been given Nobel Prize because of you know certain initial things Obama did ok. Many people criticize that this is like hero worshipping, so which is true for many leaders, world leaders ok.



So, why perception is a powerful you know powerful thing in real life or in our day-to-day life? I will give you two examples; you know which both fall under this idea calls self-fulfilling prophecy. Self-fulfilling prophecy means, when we start perceiving about some person in a certain way, there are more chances that it will become true.

So, I said perception is just subjective, you think this is what it is, but it is it may not be real ok. But self fulfilling prophecy says when you start looking at things in a certain way there are more chances that it will become real ok, especially in terms of people. So, self-fulfilling prophecy says when you try to or when you perceive someone as good or bad over a period of time those people become or fulfil your expectation ok.

How does it happen? I will give one example. You know your class teacher ok. So, a class teacher believes that backbenchers are notorious students, and people who sit in the front are very studious students. Should backbenchers become notorious students? In many cases, they become notorious students. Probably, they are sitting at the back because some of them are tall and they were sent to the back row, but being tall does not mean that you should become notorious, but many a times it happens.

Why because, teacher expects certain notorious behaviour from those backbench students. And unknowingly or knowingly teacher exhibits those kind of behaviours or exhibits those expectations which the students take it as a cue and fulfil that expectation. So, the example is let us say, two people in your class talking two students in the class talking. So, if the if these two students are in the front row, you will think these students are discussing about the class, they have some doubt.

So, you will ask them, do you have any doubt, should I clarify you. So, you try to be as a teacher you tend to be nice to towards them. The same time two students are talking at the back row, you will consider that you know or the reason you will give as they are not listening to the class, you shout at them. You will tell them you get out of my class or why are you doing it, you are always doing it things like that.

So, what will happen because of that? These students who were sitting in the front will think teacher have high expectation towards me. I should be good. Students at the back whatever we do this teacher is not going to you know treat us fairly, so let us be like this you know, let us be bad students. So, this is what is Pygmalion effect. So, Pygmalion effect means, our thought process shaping other's behaviour.

Golem effect is similar to Pygmalion effect which is when we set low standards to individuals or subordinates, those standards become benchmark for employees ok. When you think employees are not going to work and you set them low standards, they have they also you know become low performers.

Instead you set high standards when you give goals to or when you set goals to your subordinates, you set higher goals, they will perform better ok. It holds true for our own self also. When you set goals for yourself, do not set lower goal. When you set lower goals, you tend to perform even lower than that. If you set higher goals, it gives you confidence and you perform better. So, this is what is Golem effect.

So, perception is not just a subjective thing. It is also a very powerful thing, because based on our you know perception, people fulfil those expectations. And many a times knowingly, unknowingly, we communicate our expectations or perception to others and that becomes the benchmark for others, and they will start behaving in the same way or they will fulfil our expectation ok.

So, I will stop here. So, what we saw is a quick summary of what we saw. Today we looked at the attribution process, how do we attribute the cause to our own behaviour and to other's behaviour. Broadly we classify those attributions into internal and external, causes as either internal cause or external cause. We use three criteria consensus, consistency and distinctiveness. Based on the combination, we judge certain behaviour to be attributed to internal cause or external cause.

We also looked at some of the biases which can happen in social context. And many a times these biases are inherent part of the way we perceive. We also looked at even though perception is being subjective, it can really affect others or it can become real. So, we looked at Pygmalion effect and Golem effect.

I will stop here. As an exercise for the next class, I would like you to look at this word job stereotype or in other words how does stereotypes play an important role in jobs or in workplace. So, stereotype is usually seen as a social phenomenon but I want you to look at or think about stereotype as a you know workplace phenomena, why in workplace or in what ways in workplace stereotypes influence work behaviour, ok.