

UNIT – 3
PERCEPTION

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INTRODUCTION : Perception can be defined as a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. However, what one perceives can be substantially different from objective reality. It need not be, but there is often disagreement e.g.: It's possible that all employees in a firm may have a great place to work, favorable working conditions, interesting job assignment, good pay, an understanding and responsible management — but — as most of us know, it's very unusual to find such a work place. Perception is important in the study of OB because people's behaviour is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself.

Perception is how people look at and understand the things. It is a unique interpretation of the situation rather than recoding of it. Perception is a complex cognitive process of understanding the world, sometimes not in its real form. Perception is a learning process and hence it differs from person to person. As a result, the same stimuli may produce different behaviours and responses. In managing the organizations, particularly in dealing with the people, managers should be able to understand the perceptions of the people. It is in this context, an attempt is made here to explain the perceptual process, factors influencing perceptions and managing the perceptions to the advantage of the organization.

Nature and Importance:

Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret as per their sensory immersions in order to give meaning to their environment. It is important to study perceptions in the study of Organization Behaviour, because people's behaviour is based on their perception of' what reality is and is not on reality itself.

Perception is influenced by many factors. These factors may be in the perceiver, or the object being perceived or the situations in the context of which perception is made. Personal characters that affect perception are attitude, personality, motives, interest, past experience and expectations. Our perception of people differs from our perception of inanimate objects such as desks, machines, etc. because our inferences are due to actions of people. Because people have beliefs, motives or intentions, our perceptions and judgment significantly is influenced by assumptions we make about that a person's internal state.

Perceptual Process Perception is the process by which people select, organize, interpret and respond to information from the world around them. This information is obtained through the senses namely, seeing, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Perception may be defined as the process of receiving, selecting, organizing, interpreting, checking, and reacting to sensations. It is also defined as 'a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environments.' The perceptual processes show that their functioning is affected by three variables – the objects perceived, the environment in which perception occurs, and the individual perceiving the objects.

FACTORS INFLUENCING PERCEPTION : A number of factors operate to shape and sometimes distort perception. These factors can reside in the perceiver, in the object or target being perceived, situation in the context of which the perception is made.

The Perceiver : When an individual looks at a target and attempts to interpret what he or she sees, that interpretation is heavily influenced by personal characteristics of the individual perceiver. Among the more relevant personal characteristic affectinig perception are attitudes, motives, interests. expectations and past experiences.

Unsatisfied needs or motives stimulate individuals and may exert a strong influence on their perceptions

The Target being perceived: Characteristics of the target that is being observed can affect what is perceived. Loud people are more likely to be noticed in a group than quiet ones. Motions, sounds, size and other attributes of a target shape the way we see it. Because targets are not looked at in isolation from its background, the relationship of a target to its background influences perception, as does our tendency to group close things and similar things together. What we see depends on how we separate a figure from its general background. Objects that are close to each other will tend to be perceived together rather than separately. As a result of physical or time proximity, we often put together objects or events that are unrelated. Persons, objects, or events that are similar to each other also tend to be grouped together.

The Situation : The context in which we see objects or events is important. Elements in the surrounding environment influence our perception.

For Example You are more likely to notice our employees grouping off, if your boss from the head office happens to be in the town. Again the situation affects our perception. The time at which an object or event is seen, can influence attention such as location, light, heat, or any number of situational factors.