3.0 Perception

1. What does the term ‘distinctiveness’ mean in attribution theory?

As one of the key elements of attribution theory, distinctiveness refers to the frequency in regard to similarity of behavior of a person in different settings. To simplify it further, distinctiveness is whether the observed person acts the same way in different types of situations. When a person shows different behavior in different settings, the distinctiveness is high.

2. Define perception.

Perception is defined as a process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world. In other words, perception is a process by which individual’s organize and interpret their sensory impression in order to give meanings to their environment.

3. List out the characteristics of perception.

The major characteristics of perception are enlisted as follows:

- Perception is the base of every individual’s behavior.
- It is a psychological process.
- Perception differs from individual to individual and situation to situation.
- Perception is often developed by education and training.
- Perception is based on expectation.

4. What are the factors that play important role in perception in organization?

The factors that play important role in influencing perception in organization are enlisted as follows:

- Factors in the situation
  • Time
  • Work setting
  • Social setting
- Factors in the perceiver
  • Attitudes
  • Motives
  • Interests
- Factors in the target
5. What are stimuli in perceptual process?

Stimuli are the input in perceptual process. In other words, the perception process begins with the reception of stimuli. These stimuli are received through the five sensory organs from the various sources. Stimuli in general are of two types:

- External: light, sound, etc.
- Internal: feeling of pain, disease, tension, hunger, thirst, etc.

6. Define the terms consensus.

Consensus refers to behavior of others in similar situation. In other words, it is defined as the degree to which other people, if in the same situation would behave in a similar way to the person being observed. When others behave differently in the given situation, consensus is deemed as low.

7. What is attribution theory?

Attribution theory tries to explain how perception affects behavior in organizations. As per this theory, human observe behavior and then attribute the causes to it. To be precise, as per this theory, when people attach cause and affect explanation to their behavior, it is known as attribution.

8. Define attribution errors.

An attribution error refers to the tendency of taking credit for success while blaming others or the environment for failures. Attribution error mainly occurs from the tendency of rater to judge behavior of others strictly and judges him loosely.

9. What is perception? Describe the attribution theory.

Perception

Perception is a process by which an individual organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment i.e. obtaining knowledge of external objects and events by means of sense, The knowledge is obtained by interpreting the sensory input and the sensory input supplied by sense organs and other receptors.

Attribution Theory

Attachment of cause and affect explanation by a human to their behavior is termed as attribution. The perception of people depends on whether he attributes the observed behavior to internal causes or external causes. In this regard attributions theory has been proposed to develop explanations of the ways in which we judge people differently, depending on what meaning we
attribute to a given behavior. Basically, the theory suggests that we observe an individual’s behavior; we attempt to determine whether it was internally or externally caused.

As per this theory, in making attributes people primarily focus on three major factors explained below:

a. **Consistency**: Consistency points out to the repetition of the same kind of behavior. In other words, consistency explains the extent to which an individual perceived behave in certain manner on other occasions when s/he comes up with the same situation.

b. **Distinctiveness**: As one of the key elements of attribution theory, distinctiveness refers to the frequency in regard to similarity of behavior of a person in different settings. To simplify it further, distinctiveness is whether the observed person acts the same way in different types of situations. When a person shows different behavior in different settings, the distinctiveness is high.

c. **Consensus**: Consensus refers to the extent to which other individuals in the same situations behave to the same way as the person under observation. In other words, consensus represents a scenario where individuals behave (in the same way) with the similar situation.

10. **Explain the steps involved in the perceptual process.**

**Steps Involved in Perceptual Process**

Perceptual process consists of input and output variables. The output variables determine how people show their behavior. Inputs are the objectives, events, people, etc. that are received by the perceiver. It begins when environmental stimuli are received through people’s five sensory organs i.e. ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin.

The inputs received are processed through three sub-processes explained as follows:

a. **Selection**: Human beings five sensory organs are constantly attached with stimuli. When people get noticed, they are screened out. And the process of filtering information received by people’s sense is called selective perception/attention. People are result-oriented; they can’t perceive all the inputs. People generally select the information either that is most important or most threatening.

b. **Organization** Perceptual organization is a way of assembling the selected information into a meaningful whole. The key elements of organization are

- **Grouping**: selected information are grouped on the basis of similarity or proximity.
- **Closure**: Missing parts are filled to make it complete and derive the proper meaning.
- **Simplification**: Simplification i.e. people just select important information and reject less important information.

c. **Interpretation**: In order to give meaningful information, people generally interpret on particular event. If there is no interpretation perceived, information would be meaningless.
The output of perception can be seen in the form of behavior and emotions. It may be the feeling, action, attitude, positive, negative behavior.

11. Explain the factors affecting perception.

Factors Affecting Perception

The factors that influence perceptions can be categorized into three major types:

1. Factors in the perceiver: The key factors in the perceiver that affects the perception are explained briefly.

   a. Attitude: Attitude of an individual influences what he/she perceives about other or event. For example, a teacher who has negative attitudes towards students (male) with long hair and earring will perceive them in a negative way.

   b. Motives: What is the urgent needs and desire of an individual? What his motive are often plays an important role in determining what he perceives.

   c. Experience: Experience and knowledge serve as a basis for perception. One's successful experience enhances the perceptive ability of an individual. On the contrary, failure erodes the self-confidence.

   d. Expectation: Individual often sees what they expect to see. In this regard, expectation is another key factor that affects the perception.

2. Factors in the target: It refers to the factor associated with target to be perceived. They key factors in the target are explained briefly.

   a. Size: The principle of size says that the larger the object, the more is the probability that it is perceived. Size attracts the attention of the individual. A full page spread advertisement attracts more attention than a few lines in a classified section. The reason is not difficult to see. The size establishes dominance and enhances perceptual selection.

   b. Intensity: High intensity increases the changes of selection. If the message is bright, it sentences are underlined. It gets more attention than in normal case. The greater the intensity of stimulus, the more likely, it will be noticed. An intense stimulus has more power to 'push itself our selection, filters then does the weak stimulus.

   c. Frequency: The repetition principle states that a repeated external stimulus is more attention-getting than single one. It is for this reason that advertises goes for repetitious advertising to gain the customer's attention to their product.

   d. Contrast: As per contrast principle, the external stimuli, which stands out against the background will receive more attention. For example, plant safety signs with black lettering or a yellow background or white lettering on a red background are more attention attracting.
e. Movement: The movement principle says that people pay more attention to a moving object than the stationery ones. People will be attracted more by a running train than one standing on the platform.

3. Factors in the situation: The key factors in the situation category that impacts the perception are explained briefly.

a. Time: Time associated with situation is one critical factor that affects perception. For example, a student that study deeply from the beginning understands (perceive) the subject matter easily and quickly.

b. Work setting: The work setting affects the perception in a major way. Peaceful work setting enhances the perceptive ability of an individual. On the contrary, noisy and clumsy work setting may erode the perceptive ability.

c. Social setting: Social setting - also affects the perception. Social surrounding related individuals, occasion, culture, etc., impact the perception. For example, drinking alcohol is perceived a part of life in Newar community. While for many other community, it is perceived as a taboo.

12. What is attribution theory? Explain attribution errors.

**Concept of Attribution Theory**

Attachment of cause and affect explanation by a human to their behavior is termed as attribution. The perception of people depends on whether he attributes the observed behavior to internal causes or external causes. In this regard attributions theory has been proposed to develop explanations of the ways in which we judge people differently, depending on what meaning we attribute to a given behavior. Basically, the theory suggests that we observe an individual's behavior; we attempt to determine whether it was internally or externally caused.

**Attribution Errors**

An attribution error refers to the tendency of taking credit for success while blaming others or the environment for failures. Attribution error mainly occurs from the tendency of rater to judge behavior of others strictly and Judges him loosely. Attribution errors are mainly classified into three types.

- Fundamental attribution error: The fundamental attribution error is also called the correspondence bias. It is the tendency to attribute other people's behavior to internal factors such as personality traits, abilities and feelings.
- Self-serving bias: The self-serving bias is the tendency for individuals to attribute their own success to internal factors and failures to situational factors. Self-serving bias tends to increase as time passes after an event.
• Optimistic bias: Optimistic bias is the tendency for individuals to view themselves as relatively more successful than others. Moreover, they believe that cause of their success will remain consistent, stable and expand.

13. How does the concept of perception apply in organizations?

Application of Perception in Organization

Perception applies in number of aspects in organization. Some of the most common ones are explained briefly:

1. Employment interview: Interviewers make perceptual judgements that are often inaccurate. Different interviewers try to see different things in the same candidate and thus, arrive at different perceptions about the same candidate. A good candidate and a bad one may differ markedly. Importantly, impression in the mind of interviewer weighs in the final selection of the candidate. Information elicited early in the interview carries greater weight than the information elicited later. That is why a good candidate is characterized more by the absence of unfavorable characteristics than by the presence of favorable characteristics. In this way, it is clear that where interview is an important input into selection decision, the perceptual factors influence the decision that is to be selected. This, in turn, influences the quality of labor forces selected in an organization.

2. Performance appraisal: Assessment of an employee's performance very much depends on the perception -of the evaluator about the employee. Promotions, pay raises and continuation of job are the most obvious and common outcomes of the employee's performance. Performance appraisal is both objective and subjective. It may be objective when performance can easily be quantified. For example, a salesman's performance can be assessed based on how many rupees of sales he/she generated in his/her territory during a given period of time. However, many employees' job is evaluated in subjective terms, An impressive amount of evidence demonstrates that subjective measures are more judgmental. And judgement makes one's perception more susceptible to distortions.

3. Performance expectation: New employees during their selection process acquire a set of expectations both about the organization and about the job. In case, there is big difference between what expected and what actually acquired, it results in increased employee absenteeism and turnover.

4. Employee loyalty: While assessing employees, the managers also make another important decision whether the employees are loyal to organization or not. Like effort, assessment of loyalty is also a subjective aspect susceptible to perceptual distortions and bias. As an example, an employee looking for greener pastures outside the organization may be labelled as disloyal to the organization. As a resultant behavior, the organization may cut off his future advancement opportunities.
14. How does perception affect individual decision making? Illustrate with reference to the various alternative decision making models.

Effects of Perception on Individual Decision Making

Individual can perceive differently for the same subject in different manner, which lead to the best solution. Every decision requires interpretation and evaluation of information. Data are typically received from multiple sources and they need to be screened, processed and interpreted. The perceptions of the decision maker will give solution to that question.

Individual decision making is a crucial part of organizational behavior. For instance, top managers determine their organization's goals. Similarly, non-managerial employees have to make a lot of decision during their daily works as per the different situation in hand. It affects the organization's long-term plans, its quality, performance and day-to-day operation. This all show that perception plays a vital role in individual's decision process. It is further illustrated through few decision making models

Alternative Decision Making Model

The main approaches to decision making may be studied in the following three dimensions:

1. Classical approach: This is also known as prescriptive, rational or normative model. It specifies how decision should be made to achieve the desired outcome. Under this approach, decisions are made rationally and are directed toward a single and stable goal. It is applied in certainty condition in which the decision maker has full information relating to the problem and also knows all the alternative solutions. It is an ideal way in making a decision? It is rational in the sense that it is scientific, systematic and a step-by-step process. This model assumes the manager as a rational economic man who makes decisions to meet the economic interest of the organization, this model is based on the following assumptions:
   - The decision maker has a clear, well-defined goal to be achieved.
   - All the problems are precisely defined
   - All alternative courses of action and their potential consequences are known.
   - The decision maker can rank the entire alternatives on the basis of their preferred consequences.
   - The decision maker can select the alternative that maximizes outcome.

The classical model is supposed to be idealistic and rational but it is rarely found in practice.

2. Behavioral approach: This approach is also known as descriptive approach and administrative model. The theory is proposed by Herbert A Simon, a well-known economist, in which he attempts to explain how decisions are made in real life situations. Managers have limited and simplified view of problems because they do not have full information about the problems, do not possess knowledge of all possible alternative solutions, do not have the ability to process environmental and technological information and do not have sufficient time and resources to
Conduct an exhaustive search for alternative solutions to the problems. Therefore, this model is based on two concepts:

a. Bounded rationality: Simon believed that managers are bound by limited mental capacity and emotion as well as by environmental factors over which they have no control. Real life challenges, time and resource limitations, political pressure and other internal and external factors force the manager to work under the condition of bounded rationality. Therefore, the manager cannot take a perfectly rational decision.

b. Satisfying: It is the selection of a course of action whose consequences are good enough. Bounded rationality forces managers to accept decisions that are only 'good enough', rather than ideal. Such managerial decisions become rational but within the limits of managers' ability and availability of information. Managers make decisions based on alternatives that are satisfactory. The examples of satisfying decisions are fair price, reasonable profit, adequate market share, proper quality products etc.

3. Implicit favorite model/Retrospective approach: This approach is applicable in non-programmed decisions. In this approach, the manager first chooses an alternative solution to the problem and highlights its strength, and compare with other alternatives and then identifies its drawbacks. This is done with a view to proving that the alternative selected by the best solution to the given problem. However, another alternative which seems to be similar to the implicit favorite is short listed and is taken as second confirmation candidate. This approach can be observed in the purchase of various favorite items in which a customer gives arguments in favor of his choice on the basis of norms such as price, quality, appearance, easily availability, after-sales service etc. to reject other items of same utility.

15. What is perceptual set? Discuss the principles of perceptual selection.

Perceptual Set

Perceptual set is an expectation of a perception based on past experience with the same or similar stimuli. It presents a broad view about the environment and people which helps to guide an individual's perception and behavior at work. The sources of perceptual sets are past experiences and contents; past experience are the factors within a perceiver whereas contents are factors outside the perceiver, which shape the perception and perpetual relation of a person.

Principles of Perceptual Selection

People are goal oriented and they have limited capacity to perceive. Therefore, they are always selective. They select from among those physical stimuli which they can grasp at the moment in time. Likewise, they select those stimuli which satisfy their needs, desires and expectations based on their capacity. Some of the important principles of perceptual selection are given below:

1. Intensity: High intensity increases the changes of selection. If the message is bright, it gets more attention than in normal case. Greater the intensity of stimulus, the more likely, it will
be noticed. An intense stimulus has more power to push itself our selection, filters then does the weak stimulus.

2. Size: The principle of size says that the larger the object, the more is the probability that it is perceived. Size attracts the attention of the individual. A full page spread advertisement attracts more attention than a few lines in a classified section. The reason is not difficult to see. The size establishes dominance and enhances perceptual selection.

3. Frequency/Repetition: The repetition principle states that a repeated external stimulus is more attention-getting than a single one. It is for this reason there is repetitive advertising to gain the customers attention.

4. Contrast: As per contrast principle, the external stimuli, which stands out against the background will receive more attention. For example, plant safety signs with black lettering or a yellow background or white lettering on a red background are more attention attracting.

5. Status: Status held by an individual also influences his/her perception about things or events. Researchers suggest that people with high status often exert more influence on the perception of an individual as compared to those holding low status.

6. Movement: The movement principle says that people pay more attention to a moving object than the stationery ones. People will be attracted more by a running frail than one standing on the platform.

7. Novelty and familiarity: This principle says that either a familiar or a novel (new) factor in the environment can attract attention, depending on the circumstances. For example, people would quickly notice an elephant walking along a city street. Someone is likely to notice the face of a close friend among a group of approaching people.