

MODULE FIVE

PERCEPTION

Perception according to Gregory and Ricky 1998, perception is defined as the set of processes by which the individual becomes aware of and interprets information about the environment. Perception is not a single process; it consists of several distinct processes including receiving information in many guises, from spoken word and visual

Image to movement and form. The perceptual process helps the perceiver to assimilate the variety types of incoming information for the purpose of interpreting.

Steven,(1996,pp132),argue that perception is a processes by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impression in order to give meaning to their environment and Hellrugrel had the view that perception is a selection and organization of environmental stimuli to provide meaningful experiences for the perceiver. It involves searching for, obtaining and processing information in the mind. It represents the psychological process whereby people take information from the environment and make sense of their world. It therefore means we can perceive the object effectively from its reality. For instance, soccer fans saw the same thing but can interpret it differently. Since perception is a process, it has a framework as illustrated below.

The perceptual framework

Object (Another person, an event, activity)



The focal point perception

Awareness (Stimulus makes the individual aware of the object through the use of 5 senses; sight, touch, smell, taste, and hear)



Recognition (the object is recognized for what it is)



Interpretation (The meaning of the object is then interpreted)



Response (this includes change in behavior and attitude)

Adopted from; Gregory & Rick 1998 pp57, O.B., Boston Houghton Maffin Publisher

Factors That Influence Perception (X-Tics)

Individuals can look at the same object and perceived it differently. A number of factors operate to shape and sometime distort the perception. Perception is influenced by the characteristics of the object (what is being perceived is the target), characteristics of the person (the perceiver) and the situation.

Characteristics and factors that affect perception

X-tics of the person

Saliency

Attitude

Personality

Self concept

X-tics of the object

Contrast

Intensity

Movement

repetition

Novelty

Situational X-tics

Selection

Stereotyping

Halo effect

Projection

Characteristics of the object

Characteristics in the object that are being observed can affect what is being observed, such characteristics include:

Contrast:

An outstanding object from its surrounding is more noticeable. Loud people are more likely to be noticed in a group more than quite people, soldiers avoid contrasting by camouflage and concealment, chameleon or a manager interviewing 20 women and one man will remember the man easily because of his contrast with the environment.

Intensity:

The more intense the external factor or object (colour, depth, and sound/loudness), the more likely it is to be perceived for instance, we tend to listen carefully to a person who is yelling or whispering because the intensity of the utterance is unusual.

Movement:

An object in motion is likely to be perceived more than a stationed object, we become aware of its surrounding for example a student moving out of a class.

Repetition:

Repetition can also increase on awareness. Everybody could recall the advert of Vicks Kingo, x-mas jingle bell during end of year festival. We can remember a repeated request by a subordinate more easily than if he or she had it once.

Novelty

An object novelty can stimulate our perception e.g. people wearing unusual cloths, books with strange covers, athlete and people with strange names can attract our attention e.g. HIV, a former student of KIU we are likely to remember people whose behaviors are unexpected.

Managers therefore have to spend a great deal of time and energy in shaping how people use their organizations, products and services e.g. BB soda, Alvaro.

Characteristics of the person

When an individual looks at the target or object and attempts to interpret what he or she sees, the rules predation is heavily influenced by personal characters of the individual perceiver as follows:

Salience

This is the individuals telling how important the target or object is to him/her. The more salient the object is to you (perceiver), the more attention you are likely to pay to it. For instance, an article in newspaper say sports for sportsmen, politics for politicians an article about your University.

Disposition

A short term emotional response triggered by various environmental stimuli for instance, a manager blamed for poor or low performance that is in a lousy mood it realizes with short time that a subordinate has errors in his/her will perceive this to be poor performance and will not have any tolerance for that.

Attitude

These are long lasting teaching about things. Attitude influence our perceptions in dramatic ways for instance, our attitudes towards big classes as lectures varies.

Self concept

This is a person's perception of himself/herself. A person who has a good self consept tends to see things in a positive and enriching light. A negative self concept on the other hand can give a personal perception's unfavorable or limiting cast.

Personality

This is a set of distinctive traits and features that makes that person unique. Different personality traits can cause differences in the way individual recognize and interpret their surroundings. An extrovert for instance, may eagerly respond to a conversation while an introvert in contrast may be less interested in what people are talking about.

Situational characteristics

This is context to which we see object or events as important elements in the surrounding environment being influenced by perceptions. This means that the same person in different situations. The major situational process includes;

Organization

This refers to our tendency to order on perception so that they fit logical, consistent systems of meaning. As we organize we often filter out stimuli that do not match with our view of reality. A manager who believes a particular subordinate is hardworking, conscientious and loyal. One day the manager notice the works goofing off, because this perception does not fit in to the managers' image of the worker he may choose to see the behavior as well earned after hand work. This helps the employees to develop attitudes towards many features of working place like pay, benefits, their supervision, their co-workers, working conditions, promotion opportunities for organizational purposes.

Stereotyping

This is the process of categorizing people into groups on the basis of certain presumed traits or qualities, first we identify the categories by which we sort people (e.g. sex, race, region), we associate attributes we have decided of for instance, all secretaries are women. These affect us during recruitment.

The halo effect

This influences our perception when we rely on a single characteristic override an assessment of individual and other characteristics.

Projection,

This occurs when we see ourselves in another way or others. If we are aggressive, power hungry, we may rationalize these traits by telling on self that everyone else is the same and that to get ahead we must take of ourselves. It makes us become timid and fail to help a colleague who asks for a help for example, an immediate subordinate. The idea of you wants to take over.

ACTIVITY

1 (a) What is perception?

(b) Explain any five factors influencing perception