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PERCEPTION

Definition of perception

Perception means perceiving, i.e., giving meaning to the environment around us. It can be defined as a process which involves seeing, receiving, selecting, organising, interpreting and giving meaning to the environment.

Nature of perception

- (1) Perception is the intellectual process.
- (2) Perception is the basic cognitive or psychological process.
- (3) Perception becomes a subjective process and different people may perceive the same event differently.

Perception and Sensation

There is a distinction between sensation and perception. Sensation is the response of a physical sensory organ. The physical senses are vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste. These senses are bombarded by stimuli and reactions in particular sense organ take place because of these, e.g., of sensation may be reaction of eye to colour, ear to sound and so on. Sensation precedes perception. Perception is much more than sensation. Perception depends upon the sensory raw data. The perceptual process adds to or/and subtracts from the sensory world. Perception is determined by both physiological and psychological characteristics, of the organism. However, sensation only activates the organs of the body and is not affected by such psychological factors as learning and motives. Activation of eyes to see an object is sensation and the inference what is being seen is perception. For managerial action, it is the latter which is important.

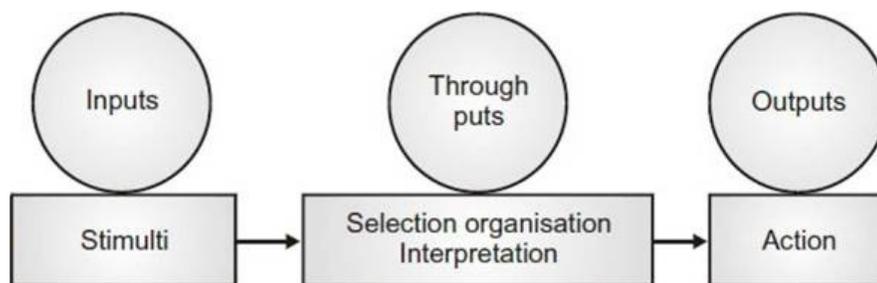


Fig. 13.1: Perceptual Process.

Perceptual Process

Perception is a process of receiving, selecting, organising, interpreting, checking and reacting to stimuli. This is like an input-through put-output process in which the stimuli can be considered as 'inputs' transformation of 'input' through selection, organization and interpretation as 'through puts' and the ultimate behaviour/action as 'output'. The whole perceptual process can be presented as follows : These are explained one by one

1. Receiving Stimuli : The first process in the perception is the presence of stimuli. The stimuli are received from the various sources. Through the five organs. It is a physiological aspect of perception process. Stimuli may be external to us (such as sound waves) and inside us (such as energy generation by muscles).

2. Selection of Stimuli : After receiving the stimuli or data, some are selected. Others are screened out. Two types of factors affect selection of stimuli for processing : external and internal factors. External factors relate to stimuli such as intensity of stimuli, its size, movement, repetition, etc. Internal factors, relate to the perceiver such as his/her age, learning, interest, etc. Normally, he will select the objects which interest him and will avoid that for which he is indifferent. This is also called 'selective perception'.

3. Organization of Stimuli : Organising the bits of information into a meaningful whole is called "organization". There are three

ways by which the selected data, i.e., inputs are organised. These are :

(i) Grouping, (ii) Closure and (iii) Simplification.

(i) **Grouping** : In grouping, the perceiver groups the various stimuli on the basis of their similarity or proximity. For example, all the workers coming from the same place may be perceived as similar on the basis of proximity.

(ii) **Closure** : When faced with incomplete information, people fill up the gaps themselves to make the information meaningful. This may be done on the basis of past experience, past data, or hunches. For example, in many advertisement, alphabets are written by putting electric bulbs indicating the shape of the concerned alphabets but broken lines. In such cases, people tend to fill up the gap among different bulbs to get meaning out of these.

(iii) **Simplification** : People identify main stimulus features and assesses how they are organized. He interprets a stimulus situation, the perceiver simplifies the information.

Factors Influencing Perceptual Set External Factors

1. **Size** : Bigger size attracts the attention of the perceiver

2. **Intensity** : A loud sound, strong odor or bright light is noticed more as compared to a soft sound, weak odour or dimlight.

3. **Repetition** : A repeated external stimulus is more attention getting than a single one. Advertisers use this principle.

4. **Novelty and Familiarity** : A novel or a familiar external situation can serve as attention getter.

5. **Contrast** : It is a kind of uniqueness which can be used for attention getting. Letters of bold types, persons dressed differently than others, etc., get more attention.

6. **Motion** : A moving object draws more attention as compared to a stationary object. Advertisers use this principle.

Internal Factors

Self-concept : The way a person views the world depends a great deal on the concept or image he has about himself. The concept plays an internal role in perceptual selectivity.

Beliefs : A person's beliefs have profound influence on his perception. Thus, a fact is conceived not on what it is but what a person believes it to be.

Expectations : These affect what a person perceives. A technical manager may expect ignorance about the technical features of a product from non-technical people.

Inner Needs : The need is a feeling of tension or discomfort, when one thinks he is missing something. People with different needs experience different stimuli. According to Freud, wishful thinking is the means by which the Id attempts to achieve tension reduction.

Response Disposition : It refers to a person's tendency to perceive familiar stimuli rather than unfamiliar ones.

Response Salience : It is the set of disposition which are determined not by the familiarity of the stimulus situations, but by the person's own cognitive predispositions. Thus, a particular problem may be viewed as a marketing problem by marketing personnel, a control problem by accounting people and human relations problem by personnel people.

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

1. Denying the existence or importance of conflicting information.

2. Distorting the new information to match the old one.

3. Acknowledging the new information but treating it as a non-representation exception. The factors that influence perception may be broadly divided into three categories :

1. Factors that reside in the 'Perceiver' (i.e., attitude, motives, interests, past experiences and personality, expectations)

2. Factors of the 'situation' and-factors connected with the 'Target'.

3. Factors that determine the preferred location of a brand on each of the relevant dimension in perceptive mapping.