

Example of social
perceptions: are our
social perceptions
often inaccurate
articl...

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



Social perception gives people the ability to predict what others are thinking or feeling and the ability to understand the motivations of others. However, social perceptions can be considered inaccurate in most cases because personal beliefs, expectations, and ambiguous messages received from others can impact their accuracy. Recent neurological research proved that all people have the ability to perceive correct information from targets, but that research did not focus on internal psychological factors that can distort or neglect those perceptions.

According to various researchers, personal beliefs can distort social perceptions and make them inaccurate. Self-serving bias and personal preferences are some examples of biased beliefs that can impact social perceptions and reflect in social behaviors (Jussim, 2012). In several instances, expectations were also found to be a significant factor in shaping social reality, but they often become self-fulfilling prophecies because the perceiver is influencing the target in most cases rather than altering the perception process (Jussim, 2012).

On the other hand, neuroscience research suggests that social perceptions are often accurate when the perceiver is receptive to the mental and emotional states of others. According to various studies, perceivers engage their mirror neuron system when they are both observing and executing motor actions (Zaki & Ochsner, 2011). When observing non-painful touch or targets in pain, the perceivers also engage their somatosensory cortex (Zaki & Ochsner, 2011). Finally, it is suggested that accuracy is at stake when the perceiver's targets do not want to be understood or when their non-verbal expressions do not match internal experiences.

While it is evident that personal beliefs influence social perceptions, it is also evident that several physiological mechanisms are in place to mimic the perceived experiences and understand the feelings, motivations, and experiences of others. It is possible to suggest that the physiological systems have the ability to process accurate social perceptions, but a variety of internal factors can influence them. Therefore social perceptions can be considered accurate when the perceiver is objective, but they are also inaccurate when perceivers introduce bias, which interferes with the social perception process.

References

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- Zaki, J., & Ochsner, K. (2011). Reintegrating the study of accuracy into social cognition research. *Psychological Inquiry*, 22(3), 159-182.