Perception, attribution, diversity

[Sociology](#)

Chapter 3 Perception, Attribution and Diversity

Perception – the process of interpreting the messages of our senses to provide order and meaning to theenvironmentpeople base their actions on the interpretation of reality that their perceptual system provides rather than on reality itself

Components of Perception

The perceiver
Their experience, needs and emotions can affect his or her perceptions of a target Most important characteristic is experience
Past experiences lead the perceiver to develop expectations and those affect current perceptions Our needs unconsciously affect our perceptions by causing us to perceive what we wish to perceive Perceptual defence – The tendency for the perceptual system to defend the perceiver against unpleasant emotions The target

Perception involves interpretation and adding meaning to the target. Ambig targets are especially susceptible to interpretation and addition The situation

Every instance on perception occurs in some situational context and this context affects what one perceives Most important effect is that it adds information about the target Perceiver and target may remain the same but the perception of the target will change depending on the situation

Social   Identity   Theory
People form perceptions of themselves based on personal characteristics and memberships in social categories – basically composed of a personal identity and a social identityPersonalityidentity –traits, unique personal

characteristics Social identity – social groups like gender, nationality, religion People tend to perceive members from their own social category more positively than if they from another social category

A   model   of   the   perceptual   process According   to   Jerome   Bruner,   this   is   what   happens Unfamiliar   target   encountered Openness   to   target   cues Familiar   cues   encountered (social)   target   categorized Cue selectivity (perceiver actively ignores/distorts cues that contradict initial categorization)   Categorization   strengthened From   this   we   learn   that Perception is selective. We do not use all the available cues and those that are used are give special emphasis Our perception works to paint a constant picture of someone – perceptual constancy. We percieve the target the same over time and different situations Perceptual consistency – the perceivers tendency to ignore and distort cues to form a consistent image of the target

Basic   Biases   in   Person   Perception Primary effect – The tendency for a perceiver to rely on early cues on first impressions. Often has a lasting impact Recency effect – people give undue weight to cues they encounter most recently Reliance on Central Traits

Centrail traits – personal characteristics of a target that are of interest to the perceiver   Early   cues   don't   have   much   weight   against   this They   have   a   powerful   influence   on   our   perceptions   of   others A big trait would be attractiveness – people who are considered attractive

are also perceived as good when it comes to social competence and job performance   Implicit   personality   theories

Implicit Personal theories – characteristics that we believe go well together

Ex)   someone   who   is   hardworking   must   be   honest

They   provide   a   base   for   misunderstanding

Projection

The tendency to attribute ones thoughts or feelings to another. We basically see another person as we are They can also serve as a form of perceptual defence especially with the projections of negative attributions Ex) yeah I steal but so does everyone else

Its reasonable but sometimes its misleading. An honest worker maybe surprised

to find inventory missing when he believes everyone is honest Stereotyping

Generalizing people in a certain social category and ignoring variations among   them   We   distinguish   some   category   of   people

We assume individuals in these categories have certain traits We believe everyone   in   thie   category   has   those   traits

Many   stereotypes   are   inaccurate

They   persist   because

Its easier for the perceiver to rely on an inaccurate stereotype than discover the true nature of the target Stereotypes are reinforced by selective perception and selective application of language

Attribution: perceiving   causes   and   motives

Attribution – the process by which causes or motives are assigned to explain peoples behaviours Very important in organizations b/c rewards and

punishments are based on what people think the targets motive was Dispositional attributions – bases a person behaviour on their personality or intellect. Ex) laziness, intelligence, greed Situational attributions – person's external environment is the cause of the behaviour Ex) bad weather, good luck, poor advice

As we get familiar with the target, there are cues we notices to recognize their intentions Does the person engage in this behaviour regularly (consistency cues) Do most people engage in this behaviour or is it only this person (consensus cues) Does the person behave like this in many situations or is it distinctive to one? (distinctiveness cues) Consistency cues

How consistently a person behaves. High consistency is seen as a dispositional attribute Consensus Cues How a person's behaviour compares with others Person who deviates from social expectations is seen as revealing more about their true motives Distinctiveness cues Reflects the extent to which a person engages in some behaviour across a variety of situations If the behaviour is highly distinctive , in that it occurs only in one situation, we are likely to believe that some aspect of the situation caused the behaviour Attribution in Action

Ex) Roshani – absent a lot, employees seldom absent and she was absent a lot in her previous job ? highly consistent, low consensus, not distinctive ? more likely dispositional attribution like shes irresponsible or lazy Mika – absent a lot, co-workers absent a lot, seldom absent in previous job? highly consistent, high consensus, distinctive ? more likely a situational attribution

like the boss is nasty Sam – seldom absent, coworkers seldom absent, seldom absent in previous ? inconsistent, high consensus, not distinctive ? most likely a short term situational factor like a sick child Biases in Attribution

Observers often operate in a rational, logical manner in forming attributions about behaviour Attributions made are not necessarily always right but they do represent good bets on why the behaviour occurred Errors

Fundamental   attributions   error
Tendency to overemphasize dispositional attributions at the expense of situational   explanations   Why?
We tend to discount the effects of social roles on behaviours ex) bankers are seen as conservative but thanks because they're job requires them to be that way Many times we see people in constant situations (like everyday at school) that we may forget how they behave in other situations This can lead to problems for managers with poorly performing employees. They may attribute their failures to dispositional attributions when the cause may actually be situationa Actor Observer effect

Tendency of actors and observers to view the cause of the actors behaviour differently Observer would be committing fundamental attribution error whereas actor would focus on the role of the situation as the cause for their behaviour This happens because the actor is more aware of their feelings and thoughts towards their situation whereas the observer is unaware of that This usually occurs during negative events. During positive events, the actor makes a dispositional attribution and the observer a situational attribution) Self-Serving Bias

The tendency to take credit for positive outcomes and to denyresponsibilityfor negative outcomes Positive outcome – dispositional attribution

Negative outcome – situational attribution

Perception and Workforce Diversity

Workforce diversity – differences among recruits and employees in characteristics such as gender, race, age, religion, cultural background, physical ability or sexual orientation Stems from two broad facts – 1) workplace growing more diverse 2) organizations are not managing workforce diversity very well The changing workplace

Before : Caucasian, male

Now: people of different ethnicities and women

Visible minorities to double by 2017

Companies trying to have their workforce to be representative of their customer base Valuing diversity

Before it was fine to just tolerate diversity (that is abide by fair practices and by making sure people who were different were taught to fit in) but now we focus on valuing it Competitive advantages to valuing diversity

Cost argument – as organizations become more diverse, cost of a poor job in integrating workers will increase Resource acquisition – companies develop reputations on favorability towards women and minorities. The companies that manage diversity well will have an edge Marketing argument – People from different ethnicities bring insight and cultural sensitivity that can be used for marketing efforts Creativity argument – diversity of perspectives and less emphasis on conformity to norms can lead to more creativity

Problem solving argument – heterogeneity in decision and problem solving groups potentially produces better decision through a wider range of perspectives and more thorough critical analysis System Flexibility argument – system less determinant, less standardized more fluid enabling the organization to respond faster to environmental changes Stereotypes and Workforce Diversity

Stereotype threat – when members of a social group might be judged or treated or according to a stereotype Racial, ethnic and religious stereotypes Usually persistent, negative and self contradictory Sometimes people are blamed to be lazy but at the same time, they are blamed for taking jobs away Whites have found to advance further in the hiring process than blacks even if they have the same qualifications, physical built and personality Female job applicants who appeared to be muslim had a harder time through the application process than non muslims Good performance by an African American worker was seen as due to the guidance of other workers (situational) and good performance by a Caucasian worker was seen as a dispositional attribution An organization is a reflection of the environment it is in. So if prejudice, negative stereotyping, ethnocentrism exists within the environment the organization inhabits, its likely the problems will be seen in the organization Gender Stereotypes

Top level positions – women are severely underrepresented (only 14. 4 percent in top 500 canadian companies) Stereotypes of women do not correspond well with stereotypes of business people or managers Male managers still hold stereotypes dysfunctional stereotypes about women that they did in the 70s Women were discriminated against for promotion to a

branch manager or to attend a professional development conference Women receive less support when a problem ought to be fired

They receive more favourable responses when they need to take a day off for their kids and also " women" jobs like secretary Female managers more likely to make of the job sacrifices than their male counterparts These stereotypes are eradicated when managers have a better understanding of their qualifications Women also tend not to suffer during performance evaluations simply because managers see the work they put in Age stereotypes

Knowing a person's age, we tend to make assumptions about their physical, psychological and intellectual capabilities Older people are seen as less productive, creative, logical and not able to work well under pressure. Less potential for development. Also seen as more honest and stable Younger workers seen as rigid and dogmatic

These stereotypes have been found to be untrue Development does not stop until post-employment years Age has nothing to do with task performance or creativity but job performance Older works demonstrated more citizenship and safety related behaviours and displayed lesstardiness/absenteeism Age stereotypes affect HR decisions like hiring. Older workers were less likely to be hired forfinancepositions were quick decisions were to be made.

Managing Workforce Diversity (CERRDST)
Diversity has to be managed to have a positive impact in the workplace
What can be done

Recruiting

Employee   referral   programs

Diverse   recruiting   team

Internships/sponsored   scholarships

Job posting and advertising targeted towards specific groups Minority conference   and   job   fair   attendance

University   recruiting   team   made   up   of   diverse   body Retention

Corporate sponsored employee resource or affinity group (like sheppel FGI)

Benefits (adoption, domestic partner, health, dependent spending accounts)

Work-life programs and incentives (on site childcare and on site location facilities) Development

Leadershipdevelopment   training   programs

Mentorship

External   Partnership

Minority   supplier   program

Community   outreach

Communication

Award   programs   for   employees   for   diversity   achievement

Newsletters,   internal   websites   on   diversity

Senior leadership addresses, town hall meetings, business updates Training

Awareness   training   on   organizations   diversity   initiative

Issue   based/prevention   training

Team   building   and   group   process   training

Staffing   and   infrastructure

Dedicated   diversity   staff

Executive   and   local   diversity   councils

Other   things   that   can   be   done

Select a number of members and take them beyond theur token status. Recognize them for their individual achievements so that people can see variations among people Encourage team work between minorities and majorities

Ensure that those makingcareerdecisions for employees have full knowledge about the person rather than relying on second hand opinion Train people to be aware of stereotypes and to value diversity

Perception   of   Trust

Trust – willingness to be vulnerable and take risks withrespectto the actions of another party Psychological state that involves intention to accept vulnerability believing that the other person intentions or behaviour are positive Perceptions involving trust

Ability – the employee thinks that management is competent Benevolence – the degree to which the employee think their manager cares for their wellbeing and progress Integrity – the employee believes that the manager bases his/her actions on values that the employee believes is acceptable

Perceived   organizational   support

Employees general belief about how much the organization cares about them and their contributions to the company Organizational support theory - employees who perceive they have strong organizational support feel an obligation to care about the organizations welfare and help it achieve

itsgoalsEmployees with high POS are less absent, more satisfied with their job and are committed to the organization People have high POS when they believe their supervisors are supportive and its usually those supervisors that have high POS

Person   Perception   in   Human   Resources

Perceptions   of   Recruitment   and   Selection

Signalling theory – job applicants don't know much about the company so they use the recruitment process to gather cues about the company and unknown characteristics Organizational justice theory – applicants have more positive perceptions of the company when they perceive selection process to be fair. Interviews and work samples are perceived more favourably than cognitive ability tests, which are perceived more favourably than personality tests and honesty tests Perceptions in the EmploymentInterview

More valid when interviews are structured as opposed to free form What obstructs   the   validity   of   an   interview

Applicants try to put on a very favourable impression of themselves The impression the interviewer first gets of the applicant affects the final decision Interviewers compare each candidate to an ideal, which is not a bad thing but for that to happen, the candidate must know a lot about the job Contrast effects –

Candidates who have been interview earlier impact how the interviewer sees the current candidate and exaggerates it. So if there were two great candidates, before the current one, then the they may be perceived lower than they actually are and vice versa Structured interviews consist

Evaluation standardization : the extent to which the interviewer used standardized and numeric scoring Question sophistication : extent to which job related behavioural and situational questions are asked Question consistency : extent to which interviewer asks the same questions in the same order to different candidates Rapport building: extent to which interviewer does not ask personal questions that are unrelated to the job Perceptions and the Performance Appraisal

Once a person is hired the company will want some index of the persons job performance for decisions regarding pay raises, promotions, transfers and training needs Objective and Subjective Measures

Possible to find objective measures of employees in certain jobs that do not require a substantial degree of human judgement As you go up the organizational hierarchy, it is harder to quantify a managers success or Objective measures are difficult to rely on subjective measures of effectiveness usually relayed on by managers This is also ineffective in a way because managers cant observe everything that is going on Rater errors

Perceptual tendencies that cause error Leniency – tendency to perceive the job performance of the rates as especially good Harshness – perceiving the job performance of the ratees as especially ineffective Central tendency – the tendency to assign most ratees in the mid range Halo effect – the rating of an individuals trait or characteristics tends to colour all the other traits or characteristic of that individual The similar to me effect – rater gives better ratings to people who are more like them Behavioural anchored rating scale (a rating scale with specific behavioural examples of good, average and poor performance

Frame of reference (FOR training) – a training method to improve rating accuracy and provide a framework to use when rating individuals