

Attribution theory heuristics

Psychology



Attribution Theory/Heuristics

QUESTION ONE Attribution theory is a concept that allows people to make sense of their surrounding on the basis of what they consider is the cause of a phenomenon and its effect (Weiner, 1986). For instance, if a client has a bad experience with consultancy services of a local firm, the client might conclude that the services were bad because the firm is a local firm.

There are three models of attribution theory, namely, common sense psychology, correspondent inference theory, co- variation model of attribution. After review of the virtual office transcript, this paper will use common sense psychology theory to explain the behavior of a person in the media program. This paper will provide a description of this theory, its application and limitation.

Common sense psychology involves analysis of people's behavior with explanations. Observation of an individual is made; thereafter an explanation is given based on the observed facts. This theory is also called naïve psychology (Margolis and George, 2008). The theory of naïve psychology has two attributions, internal attribution and external attribution. When giving an analysis on internal attribution, the cause of the behavior is in relation to individual characteristics such as his ability, attitudes or personality. In making an external attribution, the cause of the behavior is in relation to the task, people or the surrounding environment.

In the virtual office transcript, can be used to explain the behavior of Gavin. First of all, Gavin arrives late, and Amanda, a colleague in the office notes that Gavin is dumb to look at the clock. This is an internal attribution of the common sense psychology as Gavin is judged on his personal

characteristics. Gavin slips and hits his head, this can be explained in terms of the nature that he possess, i. e. careless. This is an internal attribution or it can be explained in terms of the surrounding, i. e. the carpets made him slip. This is an external attribution. Kathy attributes to Gavin behavior as the most talkative and thus in office, Gavin usually has something to say. This attribution is internal as it portrays Gavin characteristics.

Common sense psychology can be used to explain the behavior of people in the media. For instance a news anchor needs to have confidence and high self-esteem in order to read news. Lack of confidence from a news anchor might result to lack of freely disseminating the news article. A journalist needs to be truthful in his reporting. This is an internal attribute of common sense psychology. Honesty and truthfulness will make such an individual reliable. There is also the individual aspect of dedication. A dedicated media personality will effectively conduct his/her duties as per the codes of conduct that governs media persons and thus enhance professionalism.

However, common sense psychology has many limitations and they are: This theory does not factor other influences that affect a person's behavior. For instance, Amanda's assertion that Gavin is dumb and that's why he is late for an interview exposes weaknesses of this theory. Amanda does know why Gavin is late. Maybe his car got a puncture or he had issues with the police.

This theory bases its conclusions on assumptions. For instance Kathy assumes that because Gavin is talkative, he always has something on his mind.

This theory has two attributes that explain the behavior of an individual. For instance, when Gavin slipped, Teresa had the notion that Gavin is careless

that why he fell. Another explanation is that the floor had a carpet and it was slippery. This notion was ignored by Teresa.

QUESTION TWO

Heuristics are strategies that are readily available to be in use for problem solving in an individual's life. These are experience-based techniques useful for discovery, learning and solving problems where a more reliable approach is impractical (Kelman, 2011). Heuristics methods are in use to find quick and satisfactory solution for a problem. The following are different types of heuristic approach,

Availability heuristic

false consensus effect

Anchoring heuristic.

Representative heuristic

This paper will give a brief explanation of representative and availability heuristics after which it will outline an example of representative heuristic from work or home when the strategy proved helpful and when the strategy did not prove helpful.

Representative heuristic refers to a cognitive bias where a person gives a category of a situation in reference to a pattern of previous belief or experience about the scenario in which the individual faces (Coon et al, 2010). This strategy is useful in making quick decisions but it leads to close-mindedness as in the case of stereotypes. Examples of representative heuristics include base rate fallacy, gamblers fallacy and conjunction fallacy.

Availability heuristics refers to a phenomenon where individuals predict the frequency of an occurrence within a population in consideration of how easily an example occurs in the mind.

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At one moment, a representative from Coco Cola Company met me on the streets of California. The employee was very aggressive in explaining the social policies of the company to me. I at once assumed that he come from the sales department of the company. This is because he was out on the street promoting coco cola and was aggressive in making people listen to him. This assertion was correct and thus I was able to ask him on coco cola activity in the third world and how they promote the social welfares of vulnerable people in the third world. This is an example of representative heuristic I found useful.

Representative heuristics was not useful to me when I wrongly assumed that someone who is polite and rigid must be a Briton. I made this assumption in reference to a colleague in school and started asking her about the city of Manchester and she knew nothing about it. It was such an embarrassment. Non helpful heuristic use can be avoided through the following means, Before making an assumption, confirm the idea first if it's true or not. For instance, before concluding that my colleague was a Brit, I could have asked her.

Conducting research on a particular aspect before making a conclusion. For instance, using as many case studies as possible in identifying the characteristics of the British and not basing on rigidness and politeness alone.

References

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