# The Impact of perception on Work behavior

**Dr . Amir Abou Elnaga**
Vice  Dean of College of Business Administration
Assistant Professor
Dar Al Uloom University
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Abstract**

This study examines the impact of perception on work behavior. Individual differences are important in studying organizational behavior and management for a very important reason. Individual differences have a direct effect on behavior, every person is unique because of his perception, people with different perceptions have different characteristics, needs, how they perceive the world and other individuals and interact differently with bosses, co-workers, subordinates and customers.

Individual perceptions shape organizational behavior and consequently individual and organizational success

For example, individual differences help examine why some people embrace change and others are fearful of it. Or why some employees will be productive only if they are closely supervised, while others will be productive only if they are not .Or why some workers learn new tasks more effectively than others

A helpful way to think about the importance of individual differences in influencing work behavior is through the use of the Attraction- Selection- Attrition (ASA) framework. Different people are attracted to different careers and organizations as a function of their own abilities, interests and personalities. Similarly  organization select employees on the basis of the needs the organization has . Needs refers to not only to skills and abilities, but also to individual attributes such as values, and personality. Not all attraction decisions and selection decisions work out, however, Attrition occurs when individuals discover they do not like being part of the organizations and selects to resign or when the organization determines an individual isn't successding and select to terminate .

Keywords: Perception – halo effect – stereo typing – similar to me error

1. **Introduction**

Perception isn't concept a manager can directly access or fix in others. What a manager needs is an understanding of how this factor impacts a person's view of the work environment. the " View" is the difficult part to pin down or to be confident about .

Managers in attempting to learn about employees are in a continual battle to consider the view's of others. What would it be like to have your vision restored after a life time of blindness? In reality, a first look in the world would likely be confusing, disappointing and not impressive. A newly sighted person would have to learn to identify shapes, read clocks, recognize danger judge distances and fine a way to navigate across busy intersections.

One researcher describes a cataract patient as Mr. B, a 52- year –old, who had been blind since birth. After a delicate operation his sight was restored but Mr. B struggled to use his new vision. One day Mr. B was found crawling out of a hospital window to get a closer look at the traffic on the street. His curiosity and unfamiliarity with judging distance created a dangerous problem. He left his fourth floor room to get a closer look. Mr. B wasn't familiar with judging distance, he had a size constancy perception problem, and the perceived size of the cars remained the same, despite changes in their image as it was processed through the retina Perception is empirical in that it is based on prior experience. Mr, B had never before experienced seeing cars at a distance of four floors.

2. Study Objectives

Basically, the lack of academic research which support whether or not a relationship between the perception and the work behavior.

Therefore, this study attempt to provide some viewpoints, and empirical results to understand this relationship. Following are the main objectives of this study:
1. Investigating  perceptual process
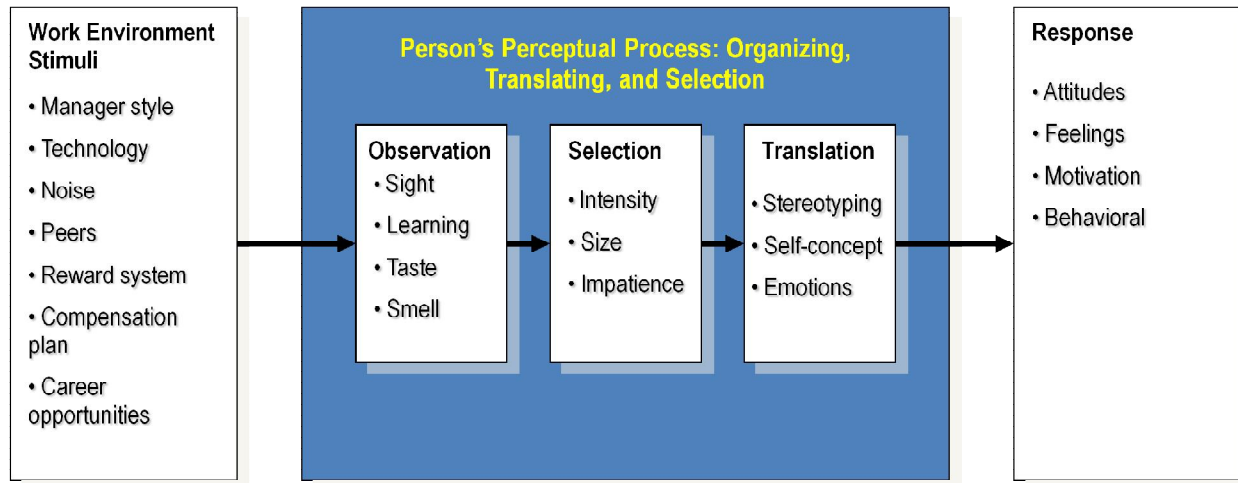2. Investigating Perceptual grouping
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3. Literature Review
## 3.1. Perception process
Is defined as the cognitive process by which an individual selects, organizes and gives meaning to environmental stimuli. Through perception individuals attempt to make sense of their environment and the objects, people, and events in it because each person gives his/her meaning to stimuli . Different individuals will perceive the same thing in different ways

Individuals are constantly bombarded by environmental stimuli which impact their sense of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Exactly which stimuli a person focuses on is determined by what he or she chooses to pay attention to at a particular moment

# The Perceptual Process: An Individual Interpretation

| Work Environment Stimuli | Person's Perceptual Process: Organizing, Translating, and Selection | | | Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Manager style<br>• Technology<br>• Noise<br>• Peers<br>• Reward system<br>• Compensation plan<br>• Career opportunities | **Observation**<br>• Sight<br>• Learning<br>• Taste<br>• Smell | **Selection**<br>• Intensity<br>• Size<br>• Impatience | **Translation**<br>• Stereotyping<br>• Self-concept<br>• Emotions | • Attitudes<br>• Feelings<br>• Motivation<br>• Behavioral |

The pervious exhibit, illustrates the basic framework and elements of perception operating as a cognitive process. Each person makes a personal / individual choices and responds differently. Understanding perceptual interpretation helps managers understand why individual differences must be considered at work. People see the world around them in their own unique way and behave and respond according to their interpretation

Individuals try to make sense of environmental stimuli by observation , selection and translation .

Perceptual selection of focusing on the stimuli that are important, large, or intense
In general people perceive stimuli that satisfy needs, emotions , attitudes or their self – concept , this is the translation portion of exhibit . if a person has a need to receive positive feedback on performance , then the positive statements made by her boss will be remembered more clearly and accurately than the negative statements she received . Again the notions of observing, selecting and translating are linked to form the perceptual process, which precedes any response, there are three internal responses attitudes- feelings and motivation

There is always the possibility that a person's perception is inaccurate. Misinterpreting stimuli can and often does result in perceptual errors. Each person selects various cues that influence his or her perception of people, objects, and symbols . because of these factors and their potential for imbalance , people often misperceive another person , group, or object . to a considerable extent people interpret the behavior of others in the context in which they find themselves .

A classic study reported by Rensis Likert clearly illustrates this . he examined the perceptions of superiors and subordinates to determine the amounts and types of recognition that subordinates received for good performance . both supervisors and subordinates were asked how often provided rewards for good work .

Managers and their employees "view" the world, stimuli, and organizational programs differently and from different perspectives. Understanding that their subjective perceptions are going to be different in something that must be tolerated and coped with in work environments. The manager has a responsibility to manage within a framework that permits and respects perceptual differences to be voiced without fear or impatience . the nearby organizational encounter illustrates how a manager's expectations can impact the behaviors and performance of employees.

My view Perception is not only passive and can be shaped by our learning, experiences and education. By training your brain and your cognitive abilities, you can improve the different skills that you use to perceive the world around you, be more aware and improve your learning capacity.

## 3-2 Perceptual grouping

Once relevant stimuli are selected, individuals categorize and group them so that they will make sense .the brain receives stimuli and seeks to recognize common pattern . this is in essence a way of organizing sensations and applies to perceptions of people , objects, or events .

1) The law of nearness-
 All other things equal, stimuli that are near each other tend to be grouped together.

2) The law of similarity-
Stimuli that are similar in size, color, shape, or form tend to be grouped together.

3) The law of closure
The tendency to complete a figure, so that it has a consistent overall form.

4) The law of Figure and ground:-
 The tendency to group sensations into figures and backgrounds.

A person who creates faulty groupings is faced with a number of different types of perceptual inaccuracies or distortions.

Individuals engaging in grouping also use what are referred to as schemas. a schema is a framework embodying descriptions of people , situations or objects. Like us all, managers use schemas to make better sense of information. A number of useful schemas for managers are:-

Personal – based.  Managers employ a profile schema of the characteristics of good, poor and outstanding employees; the schema is used to compare present employees

Role – based. These are judgments about the roles people play or can play. For example, some managers may perceive that an older employee doesn't have enough energy to travel around the worlds overseeing various projects. This perception may be completely erroneous and biased. Certainly not all old people have low energy levels.

Self – based. Individuals generalize about their own prowess, competencies, and preferences based on a current or previous experiences

Events- based. Managers develop a script or story about all events they are facing . for example the creation of a script for conducting a difficult performance feedback session would help the manager prepare for the meeting

Managers can use schemas to examine a situation or to prepare for a situation.
the schema allows a person the chance to think , organize and compare before acting . unfortunately in the process of perceiving , grouping and creating schemas there is always the potential for inaccuracies and distortions such as prejudice resulting from inaccurate stereotyping , selective attention , the halo effect , similar to me error and others

## 3-3 Perceptual errors

### Stereotyping

Is a translation step in the perceptual process employed to assist individuals in dealing with massive information- processing demands? In this regard it represents a useful even essential, way of categorizing individuals (or events, Organizations, etc) on the basis of limited information or observation.

The process of forming stereotypes and placing individuals in certain categories on a shorthand basis of such stereotypes can be productive if we recognize its dangers and limitations. When we speak of the Germans as efficient or the French as outstanding cooks. we are engaging in nationality stereotyping. Since many stereotypes relate to ethnic group membership, it is important to distinguish when presented with information indicating the stereotype is inaccurate. Stereotypes can be helpful, prejudice is never helpful

An extreme from of prejudice is scapegoating (blaming a person or a group for the actions of others or for conditions not of their making. thus, scapegoating is a type of displaced aggression in which hostilities triggered by frustration are redirected at safe target.

At times, the development of prejudice can be traced to direct experiences with members of the rejected group.

An employee who is repeatedly belittled and embarrassed by members of a particular work unit might develop a dislike for all members of the unit. Once the prejudice is formed, positive experiences with the persons, group, or unit usually don't reserve the prejudice

All port concluded that there are two resources of prejudice. Personal prejudice occurs when members of another group (e.g., work group, race, age cohort ) are perceived as a threat to one's own interest

Group prejudice occurs when a person conforms to norms of a group she belong to. For example, key members of a work unit dislike the manager, you may have no personal reason for disliking

the managers however, your group expects you to follow the group's position and you may go along

Although it is often assumed that stereotyping is inherently bad or wrong, this is not the case. Stereotyping is a useful process that greatly increases our efficiency in making sense out of our environment .Nonetheless, stereotyping can and does lead to perceptual inaccuracies and their negative consequences. To the extent that stereotyping create social injustice, result in poorer decision making, stifle innovation, or cause underutilization of human resources , they contribute to ineffectiveness and inefficiency .for example ,employers'' stereotypes regarding disabled workers may be an important source of the employment problems these workers frequently experience .

Inaccurate stereotypes include beliefs that disabled workers lack job- related abilities, have lower performance levels, and have higher absenteeism and turnover rates. Objective data, on the other hand, consistently reveal that theses stereotypes are false. Stereotypes can be problematic when talented, qualified.

A study of African – American and Caucasian managers indicated that African – Americans were granted less positive support and slow rates of promotion . Another study of female and male executives found that women reported more barriers to over- come for promotion and more assignments with limited authority than men

## Selective and divided attention

Selective attention refers to the fact that people give some messages priority and put others on hold. Psychologists refer to selective attentiveness as a bottleneck or narrowing in the information channel linking the senses to perception .When one message enters the bottleneck zone, it seems to present others from passing through , this may be why it is difficult to listen to two or more colleagues talking at once . Divided attention occurs when a person must divide his or her mental efforts among tasks, each of which requires some amount of attention (Multitasking)

Managers learn that some stimuli (e.g., employees) require more attention than others, Employees who make forceful requests , are superior performers , or are more respected capture the manager's attention more quickly . an employee who keeps making a request for a transfer also receives more attention . This is because of the repetition of the request

Obviously the potential for error in selecting which stimuli to attend to is always present.

## Halo effect

The halo effect occurs when a person (e.g. Manager) allows one important or noticeable characteristic of another person to bias the evaluation, perception, or impression of that person. An employee who is always at work before everyone else arrives or after they leave may be assumed to be productive and hard working.

On the other hand an employee with multiple body piercings may be considered wild and not reliable. Both of these judgments made by a manager utilize the halo effect and may be erroneous

Thus, a manager's judgment of a worker based on a single, obvious characteristic has to be cautiously reviewed. One trait or characteristic can't possibly predict with accuracy a person's performance. To think so should raise an alarm in the mind of a manager. Research has found an individual's attractiveness (e.g., beauty, looks, and shape) can significantly influence managerial decisions.

Attractiveness increased the evaluations, pay raises, and promotion for women in no managerial positions .However, attractive women in management received lower performance reviews and pay raises, as well as a decreased number of promotion opportunities. Both of these outcomes stem from the halo effect.

### Similar – to –me –error

People frequently use themselves as benchmarks in perceiving others. This can give rise to similar to me errors .one's own characteristics may affect the characteristics identified as present or lacking in others .Research suggests that knowing oneself well makes it easier to see others accurately . Also persons who accept themselves are more likely to see the favorable aspects of other people.

Basically , these conclusions suggest that if managers understand that their own traits and values influence their perception of others , they probably can perform a more accurate evaluation of their subordinates , while a manager who is quick in responding to technical requirements looks for this ability in his subordinates . this may not be appropriate to this situation

### Situational factors

The press of time, the attitudes of the people a manager is working with, and other situational factors all influence perceptual accuracy. If a manager is pressed for time and has to immediately fill an order, then her perceptions will be influenced by these time constraints. The press of time literally will force the manager to overlook some details, to rush certain activities, and to ignore certain stimuli such as requests from other managers or from superior.

### Needs and perceptions

Perceptions are influenced significantly by needs and desires. in other words , the employee , the manager , the vice president , and the director see what they want to see . Like the mirrors in the fun house at the amusement park, the work can be distorted; the distortion is related to needs and desires.

The needs and desires of people play a vital role in perception. People at different levels of needs and desire perceive the same thing differently. Power seekers are more likely to notice power related stimuli. Socially oriented individuals pay attention to interpersonal stimuli. That is to say expectancy, motives or interest also affect people perception.

## 3-4 Work behavior

Is anything a person does in the work environment .talking to a manager, listening to a co-worker, creating a new method of following up on a sale, learning new computer software, typing a memo, researching a question using an internet search engine, placing a completed unit in inventory, and learning how to use the firm's accounting system are all work behavior. However, so are daydreaming about being on the golf course, socializing with friends around the water cooler and sabotaging a new piece of equipment. Some of these behaviors contribute to productivity; others are nonproductive or even counterproductive
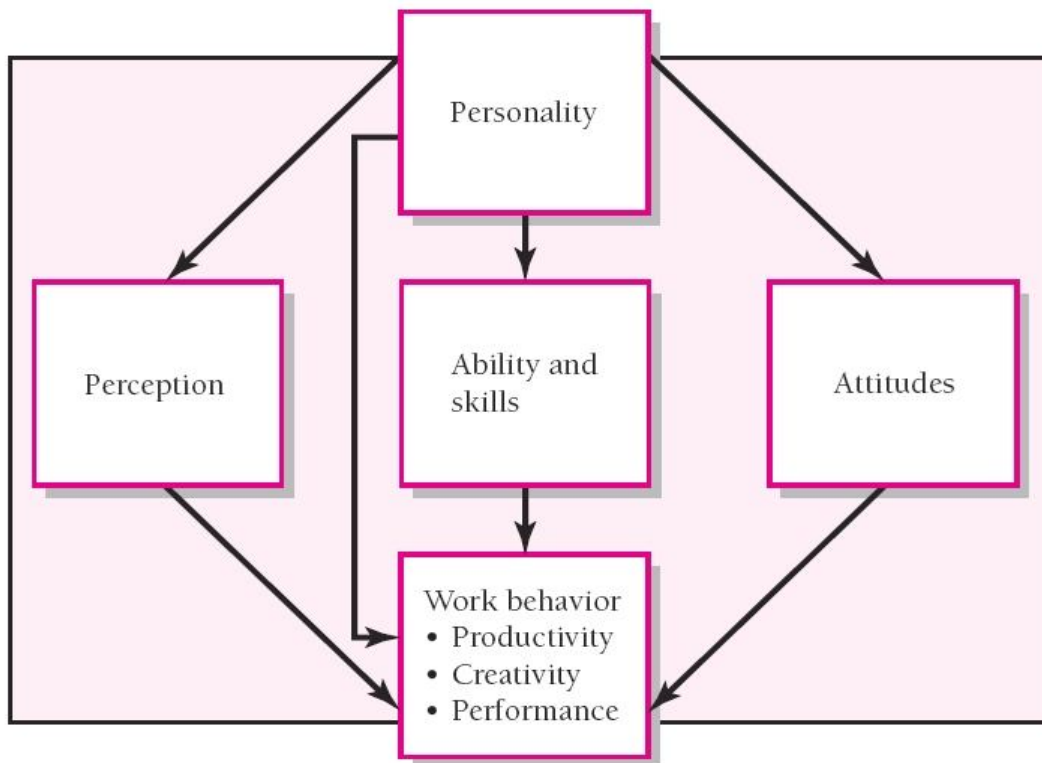


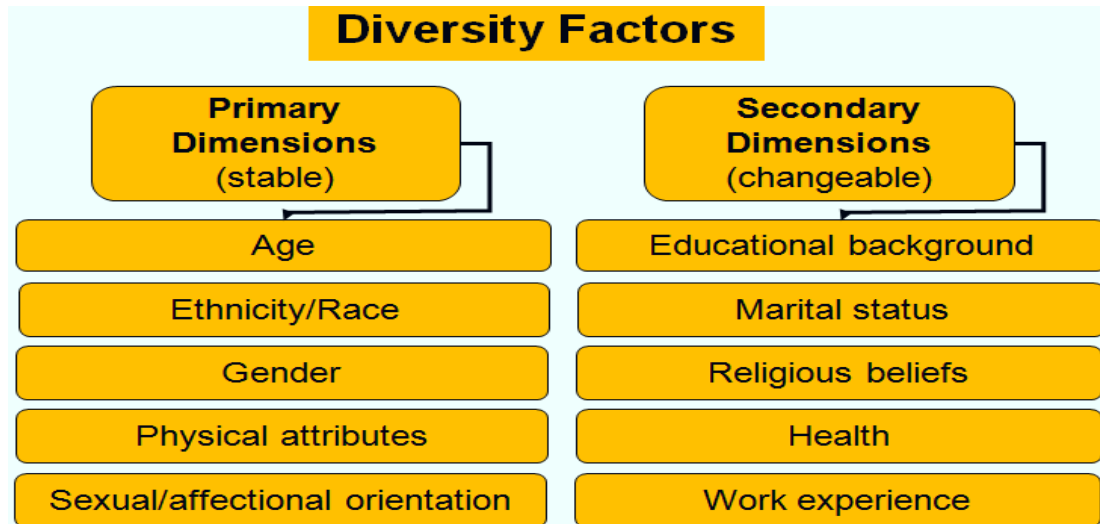## 3-5 Individual differences influencing work behavior
### 1- Heredity factors

Heredity provides a genetic explanation of some aspects of human variability. Included in discussions of heredity are debates about gender, race, and ethnic background. Psychological, mental and moral differences are influenced by genetic inheritance. However, the genetic basis of individual differences is complicated and controversial

Related to the concept of heredity, Diversity: refers to those attributes that make people different from one another, the six primary (and stable) dimensions include:-
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender

- Physical attributes
- Race
- Sexual \ flectional orientation
  Secondary dimensions (Changeable)
- Educational background
- Marital status
- Religious beliefs
- Health
- Work experience.

## Diversity Factors

| Primary Dimensions (stable) | Secondary Dimensions (changeable) |
| --- | --- |
| Age | Educational background |
| Ethnicity/Race | Marital status |
| Gender | Religious beliefs |
| Physical attributes | Health |
| Sexual/affectional orientation | Work experience |

## 2- Abilities and skills:-

Ability:   a person's talent to perform a mental or physical task.

Skill:  a learned talent that a person has acquired to perform a task.

## Key abilities:-

Mental Ability:-

- Refers to ones level of intelligence and can be divided into subcategories, including verbal fluency, comprehension, inductive and deductive reasoning, associative memory and spatial orientation.
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| Mental ability | > | Verbal fluency & comprehension |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | | Inductive & deductive reasoning |
| | | Associative memory |
| | | Spatial orientation |
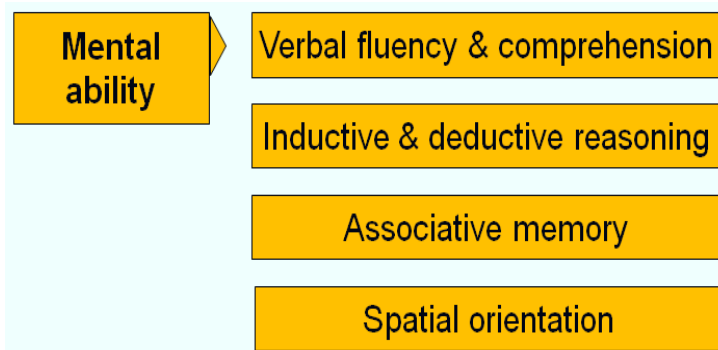
<u>Emotional intelligence (**EI**) :-</u>

- Refers to a person's abilities to be self – aware of feeling to mange emotions, to motivate one self, to express empathy, and to handle relationships and interactions with others.

Here are some examples for Emotional intelligence :

- understanding your emotions: How come you want to learn how to manage your emotions before understanding them? Understating your emotions is the first step towards becoming emotionally intelligent
- Thinking rationally about the emotion before taking an action:Emotional decisions usually result in taking incorrect actions. For example being angry can motivate you to do something that you regret later. By thinking rationally before acting you will become more emotionally intelligent
- putting yourself in the shoes of others: Emotional intelligence also involves putting yourself in the shoes of others so that you can find an excuse for their behaviour. For example, if you were a manager and one employee was not working hard then it won't be emotionally intelligent to directly assume that he is lazy or not keen to work but instead you should examine his case closer to know if there are other reasons behind it. Maybe you find that he is afraid to make mistakes or maybe you find that he lacks self confidence in his abilities

<u>Tacit Knowledge:-</u>

- The work – related practical know – how that employees acquire through observation and direct experience on the job.

- Tacit knowledge is personal, known by an individual and is context specific

- .Tacit knowledge is highly experiential and difficult to document and communicate

- .Tacit knowledge cannot easily be codified  but can only be transmitted via training &experiences.

- Tacit knowledge is about, 'know-how',' know-what',' know-why' and 'know-who

.Examples of Tacit Knowledge

- Hands-on skills,special know-how and experiences of  employees
- Tips on dealing with a difficult challenge

- Feedback from customers over the phone
- Best practices of the most prolific sales person
- Opinion expressed by management about why competitors are doing well

## 3-Attitudes:-

 Are determines of behavior because they are linked with perception, personality, feeling and motivation.

### Three Components of Attitudes

There are three components of attitude

#### 1- Cognition:-

It refers that's part of attitude which is related in general know how of a person, for example, he says smoking is injurious to health. Such type of idea of a person is called cognitive component of attitude.

#### 2-Affect:-

- This part of attitude is related to the statement which affects another person. For example, in an organization a personal report is given to the general manager. In report he point out that the sale staff is not performing their due responsibilities. The general manager forwards a written notice to the marketing manager to negotiate with the sale staff.

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#### 3- Behavior

The tendency to act in a certain way toward someone or something
The behavioral component refers to that part of attitude which reflects the intension of a person in        short        run        or        in        long        run.
For example, before the production and launching process the product. Report is prepared by the production department which consists of there intention in near future and long run and this report is handed over to top management for the decision.

Example :
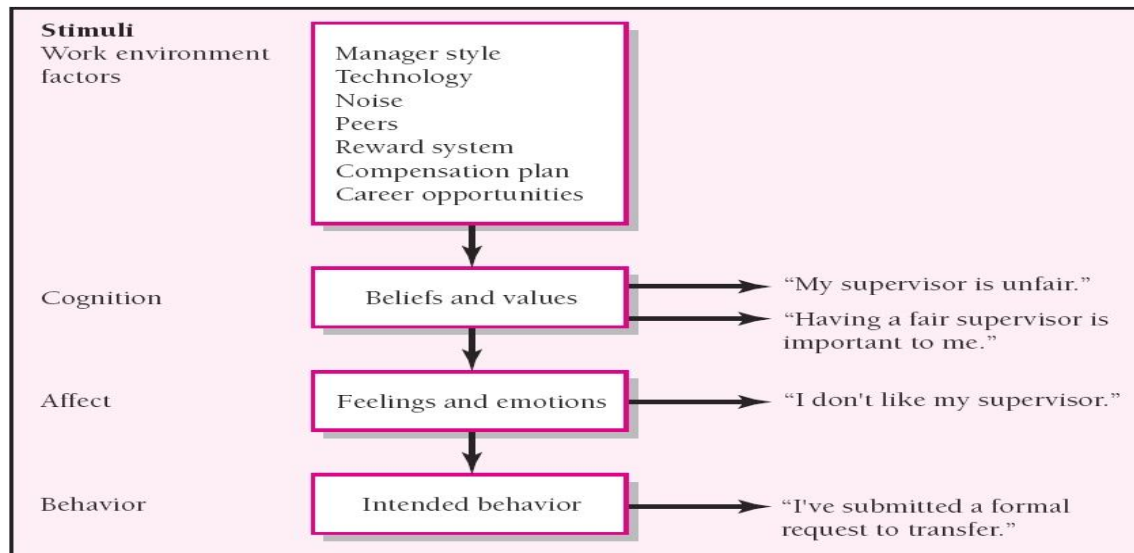
## Changing attitude

Managers are often faced with the task of changing their employee's attitude in order to get them to work harder and achieve higher job performance.

This process depends on three factors:-

The communicator:-
 The employees are more likely to change their attitude if they trust the manager, like the manager, and perceive the manager as having prestige.
The message:-

 Even if the manager is trusted, liked, and seen as having prestige, the message needs to be clear, understanding, and convincing.

The situation

    Managers' ability to change employees' attitudes depends partly on the        situation in which the effort takes place.

How to increase your Effectiveness in Changing Attitudes:-

1. Concentrate on gradually changing the attitude over a period to time.

2. Identify the beliefs or values that are part of the attitude and provide the attitude holder with information that will alter those beliefs or values

3. Make the setting (in which the attempted change occurs) as pleasant and enjoyable as possible.

4. Identify reason that changing the attitude is to the advantage of the attitude holder.

We tend to assume that people behave in accordance with their attitudes. However, social psychologists have found that attitudes and actual behavior are not always perfectly aligned. After all, plenty of people support a particular candidate or political party and yet fail to go out and vote.

Researchers have discovered that people are more likely to behave according to their attitudes under certain conditions:

- When your attitudes are the result of personal experience.
- When you are an expert in the subject.
- When you expect a favorable outcome.
- When the attitudes are repeatedly expressed.
- When you stand to win or lose something due to the issue.

## 4- Personality:-

A relatively stable set of feelings and behaviors that have been significantly formed by genetic and environmental factors.

The relationships between behavior and personality are one of the most complex matters that managers have to understand

## The big five personality dimensions:-

### 1-Conscientiousness:-

The extent to which individual are hardworking, organized, dependable, and persisting, versus lazy, disorganized, and unreliable.

### 2-Extraversion- introversion:-

The degree to which individuals are gregarious, assertive, and social, versus, reserved, timid, and quiet.

### 3-Agreeableness:-

The extent to which individuals are cooperative, worm, and agreeable, versus belligerent, cold, and disagreeable.

### 4-Emotional stability:-

The degree to which individuals are insecure, anxious, and depressed versus secure, calm, and happy.

### 5-Openness to experience:-

The extent to which individuals are creative, curious, and cultured versus practical, and having narrow interests.

Each of the Big Five factors is quite broad and consists of a range of more specific traits. The Big Five structure was derived from statistical analyses of which traits tend to co-occur in

people's descriptions of themselves or other people. The underlying correlations are probabilistic, and exceptions are possible. For example, talkativeness and assertiveness are both traits associated with Extraversion, but they do not go together by logical necessity: you could imagine somebody that is assertive but not talkative (the "strong, silent type"). However, many studies indicate that people who are talkative are usually also assertive (and vice versa), which is why they go together under the broader Extraversion factor.

Second: Locus of control:-

- Determines the degree to which they believe their behaviors influence what happens to them.

- Internals:  believe they are masters of their own fate.

- Externals:  believe they are helpless pawns of fate, success is due to luck or ease of task.

Third: Self – efficacy:-

Reflects a person's belief that he or she has the competency to complete a job successfully.

It has three dimensions:-

1- Magnitude: refers to the level of task difficulty that individual believe they can attain.
2- Strength: refers to whether the belief is weak or strong
3- Generality:  indicates how generalized across different situations the belief in capability is

Feelings of self- efficacy have managerial organizations:-

1- Selection decisions: -
Organization should select individual who have a strong sense of self efficacy.

2- Training programs:-

 Organizations should consider employees level of self- efficacy when choosing among candidates for training programs.

3- Goal setting and performance:-

 Organizations can encourage higher performance goals from employee who have high level of self- efficacy.

Fourth: Creativity
Is a personality trait that involves the ability to break away from habit- bound thinking and produce novel and useful ideas.

Creativity produces innovation, which is the lifeblood of corporations

It can be encouraged and developed by giving people the opportunity and freedom to think in unconventional ways.

Conclusion

Major individual variables that influence work behavior include demographic factors (e.g. age, sex, and race), abilities and skills, perception, attitudes, and personality shape productive, nonproductive and counterproductive work behavior.

Perception is a process that involves selection, organization, and interpretation of environmental factors, from shapes, to people and other stimuli. Through the perceptual process individuals attempt to make sense of the stimuli they receive

0nce stimuli are selected they are categorized into groups according to a number of laws: law of nearness, similarity, closure, figure and ground. The grouping makes the interpretation and sense making process easier. It doesn't, however eliminate inaccuracies or distortions

Some of the distortions in perception occur because of selected and divided attention, the halo effect, similar to me errors and situational factors

An attitude is a learned predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to people, objects, and situations with which it is related , An attitude consists of a cognitive component ( beliefs) , an affect component ( feelings) and a behavioral component , which consists of the individual's behavioral intentions

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