

TOUR OF THE BOOK

Learning Outcomes

A set of learning outcomes are identified at the start of each chapter. After you have studied the chapter, completed the activities and answered the review questions, you should be able to achieve each of the objectives.


3 PERCEPTION

Ashley Bamberg and Jennifer Hennes

LEARNING OUTCOMES

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- Define perception.
- Discuss the perception process.
- Identify common perceptual distortions.
- Explain the link between perception, attribution, and behaviour at work.
- Explain the importance of perception in organisations.



THIS CHAPTER DISCUSSES...

The nature of perception 47 | Factors influencing perception 49 | The perceptual process 53 | Perceptual distortions 58 | Perceptual defence 61 | Attribution theory 63

Key Terms

Each chapter contains an on-page explanation of a number of important words, phrases and concepts that you need to know in order to understand OB, its theoretical basis and its related areas.

Making Links

To allow you to see the interconnected nature of the topics in the field of OB, areas that link to topics and concepts in other chapters are identified.

His statement is not less true today as exploring attitudes allows us to understand how others view the world. The term 'attitude' has entered our everyday vernacular. We have different attitudes towards our families, friends, work, music, and so on which direct how we behave in relation to each one of them. Some of you might believe that Taylor Swift is the greatest pop star in the world. As a result, you may have bought all her albums and attended some of her concerts. Others might feel she is overrated and change the song when they hear her music on the radio. So, what is an attitude? If we examine the words italicised above it suggests that attitudes are beliefs or feelings or behaviours. Like many concepts within the organisational behaviour field there are competing theories drawn upon to define the term attitude, although Allport is arguably the father of attitude research, and most subsequent research is congruent with his definition. We define **attitudes** as evaluative judgements relating to people, events or objects.

There is much debate as to what constitutes an attitude. Some theorists prefer a one-component attitude model, specifically the affective component (e.g. Thurstone, 1931). Other theorists propose a two-component attitude model, incorporating a cognitive component into the one-component model (e.g. Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). They argue that exploring the cognitive underpinnings of attitudes can tell us something different about how they function in a way that the affective component cannot. A third approach is the three-component model incorporating a behavioural component. Therefore, there are potentially three different components of an attitude:

- Cognitive component:** This refers to the values and beliefs that the individual holds about a particular person or thing. The idea here is that an individual will perceive and make sense of the world in a way that is unique and subjective (See Chapter 3a. For example, a first-year student at the National University of Singapore might hold particular values and beliefs about her new university. One belief may be that she is proud to study at one of the world's most prestigious academic institutions. This may be a source of pride for the student – the underlying value supporting the belief).
- Affective component:** This points to the feelings and emotions arising from an evaluation of the two elements in the cognitive component. An individual making sense of an object, event, situation etc. evokes an emotional or affective reaction. For instance, the same student would specifically develop feelings about the university related to the inherent beliefs and values she holds about it. For example, she might have a great sense of accomplishment for having been accepted into the university. However, she might also feel greater pressure in terms of her academic performance given the high standards expected of Singapore students. The affective component of attitude structure tends to be learned from our environment (this is discussed below).
- Behavioural component:** This is about the behavioural outcome of the process. This behaviour stems from the affective component of the model. The affective reaction will

In Reality

These short vignettes demonstrate that OB is not merely 'common sense', but based on rigorous research and evidence which often contradicts our assumptions.

IN REALITY


When faced with difficult problems, when in need of the next product, when trying to improve processes in workplaces, the most common response is to create a working group to come up with creative ideas. Group brainstorming sessions are often the default when trying to come up with a perfect idea. But do they work? No, the research findings do not support this 'idea'. A meta-analysis of over 20 studies (Mullen et al., 1991) has found that group brainstorming leads to the generation of fewer ideas than comparable numbers of solitary brainstormers in both laboratory and organisational settings. Why might this be the case? First, sometimes people slack off in groups, expecting other team members to take the lead. Most often, it's the most extroverted person who shares the most ideas, not necessarily the person with the most or best ideas. Quite often people are hesitant to share ideas for fear of saying something stupid – that they'll be judged by others. Other times people get blocked by what someone else said instead of thinking things through on their own, or only come up with ideas that are similar to those already proposed. Research suggests that brainstorming is most effective when individuals take time to process the problem or opportunity individually and bring their ideas to the group. If group brainstorming is to be used, make sure that the leader does not share his or her idea first, be sure to defer judgement on ideas, and focus on trying to come up with as many ideas as possible, regardless of the quality of the idea. Additionally, the use of trained facilitators, diversifying the team members, and creating a 'playground' where members feel a sense of play and positive emotion while engaging in creativity, may reduce some of the threats to group creativity (Thompson, 2003). A further meta-analysis (DeRosa et al., 2007) found evidence that a virtual environment produces more creative ideas with higher group member satisfaction, likely by reducing some of the process loss effects described above.

Impact of Technology on Behaviour

This feature uncovers the persuasive influence of technology in today's workplace.

IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON BEHAVIOUR

Covid-19 forced the entire world to rapidly adjust to new norms, and it was made possible in large part due to virtual communication tools like synchronous document editing and video calls. Although virtual work had long been a part of many people's working lives, Covid-19 forced video communications to be a central feature of work and life for many people. Although this technology has been essential in helping people to connect with each other, it has its drawbacks as the line between work and home life has also become increasingly blurred and some report experiencing what's labelled as 'Zoom Fatigue'. Research in neuropsychology (Luo, 2020) suggests that virtual connections do not offer the brain the same type of neurochemical rewards (in the form of oxytocin and dopamine) that face-to-face communication offers because of increased audio delays and the ability for mutual gaze. At the same time, there is increased cognitive effort to fight the distraction of multitasking, a lack of boundaries with personal life, and the draw to stare at yourself in the screen. So, what to do? In their *Harvard Business Review* article, Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Duffy (2020) propose tips to 'combat zoom fatigue': avoiding multitasking, building in breaks, reducing onscreen stimuli such as by hiding your own face or simplifying background images, making social events opt-in rather than mandatory, and switching to phone calls or e-mails when appropriate.



OB in the News

Each chapter contains an example of coverage of its main topic in the media. The aim here is to highlight how you can apply the constructs and concepts in the chapter to the management of people in the real world of the workplace. A set of questions accompanies each feature to assist with this application to a practical situation.

#METOO

The 'me too' movement was instigated by Tarana Burke to help victims of sexual violence. The website www.metoo.com highlights how the 'vision' began, and the beginning was to address both the death of survivors of sexual violence and to build a community of advocates, driven by survivors, who will be at the forefront of creating solutions to interrupt sexual violence in their communities. Although the movement began in 2006, it went viral in 2017 when actor Alyssa Milano brought #MeToo to Twitter denouncing sexual misconduct allegations against film producer Harvey Weinstein. The #MeToo movement quickly gained momentum, cutting across industry and national borders, as a 'wave' of hope that the attention placed on sexual harassment allegations at this time will result in fewer incidents and less tolerance in the workplace for inappropriate sexual behaviour in the future' (Avery et al., 2019, p. 2).

The movement has ignited substantial dialogue and action in individuals and employers. According to a study within the harassment-free workplace series of the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), one in three executives reported changing their behaviour in the workplace in response to the #MeToo movement, with concerns not only to reduce the occurrence of harassment but also for the morale, engagement, and productivity of the staff. Many organisational responses include expanding training in the areas of sexual harassment and assault, implicit bias, and diversity and inclusion. Some responses to the #MeToo movement have suggested the movement has highlighted an unequal power distribution, such that those with less monetary power are more likely to abuse. An article in the *Washington Post* by Ana-Maria Buzescu, a focus on 'super star' employees that create a sense of privilege, entitlement, and a view that rules do not apply which in turn can foster abuse.

Others have written about a #MeToo backlash, in which men became more reluctant to engage with women in certain circumstances for fear of blame (Avery et al., 2019). The author's research suggested that although there have been positive outcomes such as an increase in willingness to report sexual harassment among women and a commitment to reducing inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, organisational backslides also occur. For example, 41% of men reported that men may be less reluctant to engage in one-to-one meetings with women and 22% of men and 44% of women predicted that the occurrence of sexual harassment in your workplace and school?

- Identify the main areas of organisational behaviour impacted by the #MeToo movement.
- Thinking a systems thinking approach, how might even one instance of harassment affect the organisation as a whole?
- What can you do to reduce the occurrence of sexual harassment in your workplace and school?

Sources
Avery, E.E., Triggles, A.M., Drum, R.E., Taylor, E.K. and Haddy, P.W. (2019) Looking ahead: How will we know about sexual harassment now informs us of the future. *Organizational Dynamics*, 48(4), 1-8. <https://www.mheducation.com/highered/product/organizational-dynamics-avery-et-al/9780077103891.html>
Burke, Tarana (2018) *Survived: Women's Stories of Sexual Harassment and Assault*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
DeRosa, D.M., et al. (2007) *Group Creativity: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Luo, L. (2020) *Zoom Fatigue: The Hidden Costs of Technology-Enabled Work*. *Harvard Business Review*, 98(6), 64-75. <https://hbr.org/2020/06/zoom-fatigue>
Mullen, B., et al. (1991) *Work Group Performance: A Meta-Analysis*. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 21(2), 155-177.



Building Your Employability Skills

This feature asks you to place yourself in the position of a line manager and to think about what you would do in the situation that has been presented to you.

BUILDING YOUR EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Understanding Cross Cultural Issues
American Factory, the 2019 Netflix documentary directed by Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar, tells the true story of the opening of Fuyao Glass America in Dayton, Ohio. After a General Motors assembly plant closed in 2008, Chinese billionaire Cho Tak Wong purchased the building and opened his auto glass manufacturing company. The film highlights the ups and downs of cross-cultural relationships as American and Chinese factory workers work together. Watch the trailer, available on YouTube, or the film available on Netflix, and imagine yourself moving to a new country to manage a project like this. What cultural issues are highlighted in the trailer? What factors should be considered when running a multi-national company?

Industry 4.0: Helping or Harming the Human?

As technology advances, so do we. With steam and water power, we were able to produce using machines rather than our hands. The Industrial Revolution brought us trains and electricity so we could work longer hours, produce more things and transport them more quickly. Computers brought us into the digital age, where we offloaded processing and communication tasks to machines. Now, we have the capability to use computers to do even more advanced work like identify objects (machine vision), build systems that can learn from their environment (machine learning) and more. The application of these advanced technologies to industrial settings is often called Industry 4.0. Industry 4.0 is characterized by four main principles:

1. **Interconnection**, which means entire systems are connected to each other and to the people involved.
2. **Information transparency**, which means we can collect more detailed data about the system, which we can use to make decisions.
3. **Technical assistance**, which means human abilities are supported by the technology we've developed.
4. **Decentralized decisions**, which means the system can make decisions independent of the human.

While Industry 4.0, the possibilities are seemingly endless. With technology present in Industry 4.0, we may be able to build manufacturing facilities with almost no human workers. This could save companies significant money when they can hire and train fewer workers. Machines never leave work and don't need lunch breaks. Dangerous tasks could be offloaded to machines, resulting in fewer injuries. We could make more, faster, and increase the quality of life for people around the globe.

While automating and integrating systems can be beneficial, it is important to consider how people are affected by these changes. People are good at adapting to new situations and dealing with uncertainty, but machines are not. That means that integrating robots or using machine learning in the workplace will require careful planning. New systems must be incredibly reliable if we rely on them for critical tasks without humans to catch mistakes as they occur. We have access to massive amounts of data, so we could provide people with detailed reports to help them understand when mistakes are in the process, but so much data is generated every second that it would be impossible to comprehend. Understanding how people process information and how to provide them with useful information requires careful planning and a deep understanding of the people interacting with the data.

OB in Practice
 A safety protocol at the end of the book can cause worse performance than having them do the entire task in the first place. Monitoring is a stressful and difficult task for people, so even though the system might be better, people will be less likely to do their part, or they will just be stressed while trying (Warm et al., 2008). Another concern with interconnected systems is the potential for people to back into the system. When everything was manually connected, someone would have to physically break into a manufacturing facility to make changes or damage the work. When systems are connected online, someone could potentially back in from anywhere in the world. Even if they do not change the system itself, the data in the system can be hard to protect, leaving valuable trade secrets and productivity measures vulnerable to hackers. As we collect more and more equipment, even more data is vulnerable.

Questions

1. Think about the ways that the workplace has changed in the last 10 years, 100 years and 500 years. How do you think it will change in the next 10 years? Do you really think Industry 4.0 will change the way people work?
2. How do you think Industry 4.0 will change the demographics of people working in manufacturing?
3. What concerns do you have about Industry 4.0? Do you see any ethical concerns not mentioned in the text?
4. How would you feel if you worked next to a robot all day? Do you think human-robot interactions would change the way you feel about work?

OB in Practice

These short case studies at the end of each chapter provide the opportunity for you to link the material covered in the chapter to a real-life situation. Questions are posed at the end of the case study, which can be answered either in class or as part of an assignment.

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE WORKPLACE

Is it ethical to fire someone for their social media posts? According to www.fiveemployment.org, individuals have been fired for these posts: 'First day at work. Omg!! So dull!!', 'Does anyone know where I can find a very discrete hitman?' Yes, it's been that kind of day, and 'Anyone know how to pass a drug test in 24 hours?' Others have been fired for political posts, offensive posts or posts that damage the reputation of the company. What do you think? Is it right to discipline or fire employees for certain types of posts? Who decides? Should a company be obligated to retain an employee who expresses distasteful views online?

Ethical Behaviour in the Workplace

This feature challenges you to consider how you would respond to everyday ethical dilemmas.

Chapter Review Questions

Each chapter ends with questions that can be used as class exercises or for self-testing and evaluating your knowledge about the chapter topic.

Further Reading

The aim of these lists is to highlight a few specific texts and journal articles we believe can assist you in developing your understanding and furthering your knowledge of the many areas introduced in this book.

Useful Websites

An abundance of websites exist on topics related to OB. At the end of each chapter we have identified those we believe you will find most useful in furthering your knowledge and understanding of the discipline.

CHAPTER REVIEW QUESTIONS

After reading the chapter, what is your understanding of the term 'personality'? Is it important for HR practitioners and line managers to understand personality?

1. What is the nature-nurture debate and why is it important to our understanding of personality?
2. What are the two main perspectives in personality theory? Which has better application in the workplace and why?
3. What are the five domains that make up the Big Five? List the traits that are associated with each of the five domains. Can you name the sixth HEXACO trait?
4. Your team at work is experiencing interpersonal conflict and you feel it's because of personality differences. You think it would be useful to have a team-building session using personality as a way of discussing how and why the team members approach things differently. Would you use the Big Five or the MBTI and why?
5. List some advantages and disadvantages of utilizing personality testing in the workplace.
6. Why and where should personality testing be used in the workplace?
7. What characteristics are associated with the dark triad? How might you deal with a work colleague who displayed some of these characteristics?

FURTHER READING

Ashkan M.C. and Lee, K. (2007) Empirical, theoretical, and practical advantages of the HEXACO model of personality structure. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 11(2), 50-66.

Coleman, J.A., Leppke, J.A. and Weeson, M.J. (2012) Organizational behavior: Improving Performance and Commitment in the Workplace, 3rd edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin.

Hogan, J., Barrett, P. and Hogan, R. (2007) Personality measurement, faking, and employment selection. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(5), 1210-1265.

Judge, T.A., Klinger, R., Simon, L.S. and Yang, W.S. (2008) The contributions of personality to organizational behavior and psychology: Findings, criticisms, and future research directions. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2(5), 792-800.

USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.dailymotion.com/ob>: gain the most of internet

Susan Cain presents a thoughtful reflection on the struggles of introverts in what the perceives to be an extroverted world. As you watch this TED Talk, you might think about your own experiences and ones when you felt like you didn't fit into a situation or with others' expectations of you. You might also reflect on times when you tried because you did fit in. How much of this fitting in or not fitting in had to do with your personality?

<http://www.bbc.com/news/health-20160516-personality>

The BBC provides a great deal of information about personality including a number of personality assessments. One of the assessments you can access from this website is based on the Big Five, while others focus on careers and even on the relationship between personality and food preferences.

Spotlight on Skills: text and video feature

This feature encourages you to develop your skills in OB by asking you to consider specific questions and activities. Each one is accompanied by a video interview with a professional that you can view on the book's website. The skills-related questions posed in the text feature are addressed by the practitioner in the video. To maximise this resource, you should first attempt to answer the questions in the book and then watch the video.

SPOTLIGHT ON SKILLS

Personality, Fit and Selection Methods

Organisations want to hire the person who has the best knowledge, skills and abilities for the job they are trying to fill. They also want someone who will fit well into the job, work group and organisational culture. See Chapter 124. Sometimes the applicant who fits the best is lacking in one or more competencies and sometimes the person with the best skill set doesn't seem quite right in terms of their personality or fit for the job or organisation.

1. Which is more important, skills or fit?
2. Should we rely on psychometric tests and assessments when making selection decisions?
3. How do you integrate a new employee who has the right skills but might not be a clear fit?

To help you answer these questions, visit macmillanthe.com/cross-ob-2e to watch the video of Fiona Clarke, from Eurostar, talking about personality.

