

Module 3: Perception, Attributes & Decision Making

Attribution errors

- Attribution involves forming beliefs about the causes of behaviour or events.
- When we observe people's behaviour, we are curious whether it was caused by internal or external factors.
- In other words, we perceive whether an observed behaviour or event is caused mainly by characteristics of the person (internal factors) or by the environment (external factors).
- Consistency, distinctiveness, consensus are used by observers to determine whether someone's behaviour and performance are mainly caused by their personal characteristics or situational influences
- The attribution process is susceptible to errors.
- We tend to attribute our successes to internal factors and our failures to external factors. (Self-serving bias) It is caused by self-enhancement where people tend to rate themselves above average.
- Conversely, we tend to attribute the successes of others to external factors and their failures to internal factors. (Fundamental attribution errors)
- Assuming that I am a general manager. If the company gains a large share in market, I will think that I implement goods strategy. However, others may think that it is due to a competitor's company has collapsed.

Other biases

The contrast effect

- The tendency to mentally upgrade or downgrade an object when comparing it to a contrasting object.

Stereotyping

- The process of assigning traits to people based on their membership in a social category.
- **Reasons:** (1) As a form of categorical thinking, it is usually a non-conscious 'energy-saving' process that simplifies our understanding of the world. / (2) We have an innate need to understand and anticipate how others will behave. / (3) It assists the observer's own social identity and self-enhancement.
- **Impact:** (1) Stereotyping shapes and influences our personal biases. Our personal biases cause us to have preconceived opinions about people or things. / (2) Such preconceived opinions can lead to discriminations. It occurs when someone acts out their prejudicial attitudes toward people who are the targets of their prejudice. Much of this discrimination has its foundation in stereotyped perceptions that have no basis in fact but which can reduce the person's chances of being assessed fairly based on their skills and suitability for a position. / (3) It causes stereotype threats. Members of a stereotyped group are so concerned that they might exhibit a negative feature of the stereotype that they end up displaying stereotype traits they are trying to avoid.
- For examples, there is a widely-held stereotypes relating to engineers and their work. They include some positive features such as engineers are curious, hard-working but these positives are overshadowed by the mostly inaccurate negative image of a male-dominated profession whose members are socially challenged. As a result, many females are deterred from engineering. Findings reveal that women represent only about 16% of students entering Australian university

Module 4: Teams and Team Leadership

Team Design:

1. Task characteristics:
 - Task complexity: Is the task complex?
 - Teams are particularly well suited for complex work that can be divided into more specialised roles and where the people in those specialised roles require frequent coordination.
 - Task interdependence: Could one person do it by themselves?
 - The lowest level of interdependence, called pooled interdependence, occurs when an employee or work unit shares a common resource.
 - Interdependence is higher under sequential interdependence, in which the output of one person becomes the direct input for another person or unit.
 - Reciprocal interdependence, in which work output is exchanged back and forth among individuals, produces the highest degree of interdependence.
 - The higher the level of task interdependence, the greater the need to organise people into teams rather than have them work alone. A team structure improves interpersonal communication and thus results in better coordination.

2. Team Size:
 - How many team members?
 - According to 'two-pizza team' rule the ideal size should be 5 – 7 employees.
 - Teams should be large enough to provide the necessary competencies and perspectives to perform the work, yet small enough to maintain efficient coordination and meaningful involvement of each member.
 - Smaller teams operate effectively because they have less process loss. They tend to feel more engaged because they have more influence on the group's norms and goals and feel more responsible for the team's success and failure. Also, members of smaller teams get to know one another better, which improves mutual trust and perceptions of support, help and assistance from those team members.

3. Team Composition
 - Does it require different skill and knowledge sets?
 - Employees must have more than technical skills. They must also be able and willing to work in a team environment.
 - The most frequently mentioned characteristics or behaviours of effective team members are depicted in the 'Five C's' model.
 - (i) **Cooperating** (Task): Share resource & Accommodate others
 - (ii) **Coordinating** (Task): Align work with others & Keep team on track
 - (iii) **Communicating** (Task): Share information freely, efficiently, respectfully & Listen actively
 - (iv) **Comforting** (Maintenance): Show empathy, Provide psychological comfort & Build confidence

Module 7: Conflict

Behaviours can emphasize either:

- Conflict resolution
 - i. Problem solving
 - ii. Avoidance
 - iii. Smoothing
 - iv. Compromise
 - v. Superordinate goals
 - Superordinate goals are goals that the conflicting employees or departments value and whose attainment requires the joint resources and effort of those parties.
 - Refocus the parties' attention around superordinate goals and away from the competing subordinate goals which reduces the perceived conflict with each other.
 - May reduce the problem of differentiation because they establish feelings of a shared social identity.
 - vi. Reducing differentiation
 - As people develop common experiences and beliefs, they become more motivated to coordinate activities and resolve their disputes through constructive discussion.
 - vii. Improving communication and mutual understanding
 - Improve self-awareness and enhance other-awareness because individuals disclose more about themselves.
 - Such disclosure gives others a better understanding of the underlying causes of their behaviour.
 - This helps to reduce tensions
 - viii. Reducing interdependence
 - Create buffer: Loosen the coupling between two or more people or work units which reduces the effect of one party of a common task.
 - Use integrators: Integrators are employees who coordinate the activities of work units towards the completion of a common task. This reduce the frequency of direct interaction among work units that have diverse goals and perspective.
 - Combine jobs: Combining jobs is both a form of job enrichment and a way to reduce task interdependence. The employees now have a pooled rather than sequential form of task interdependence and the likelihood of dysfunctional conflict is reduced.
 - ix. Expansion of resources
 - To increase the amount of resources available
 - They need to compare these costs with the costs of dysfunctional conflict arising out of resource scarcity.
 - x. Clarifying rules and procedure

Module 11: Communication

(i) Channel: Choosing the right channel

- There are 2 main types of channels: verbal (uses words, so it includes spoken or written channels) & non-verbal (Does not use words).
- Verbal communication:
 - Face-to-face: **Advantages:** Reduces ambiguity and misunderstanding, Immediately, Multiple cues
 - Internet-based communication: **Advantages** => Can be written, edited and transmitted quickly, can be effortlessly appended and conveyed to many people, can be sent and received at different times so there is no need to coordinate a communication session. / **Disadvantages** => Poor medium for communicating emotions, reduces politeness and respect, poor medium for ambiguous, complex and novel situation, contributes to information overload
 - Social media: **Advantages** => presenting the individual's identity, enabling conversations, sharing information, sensing the presence of others in the virtual space, maintaining relationships, revealing reputation or status and supporting communities
- Non-verbal communication:
 - Facial gestures, voice intonation, physical distance and even silence
- The channel varies according to our message:
 - Notify everyone in your department (25 people) of the day, time and venue for a meeting (Using email)
 - Coordinate two close colleagues to set up a meeting (Ringing each of them)
 - Provide information on discounted health club facilities offered to employees by the hotel next door (Email)
 - Give negative feedback to a member of your department on their performance (Face-to-face – more effective. By using email, we may misunderstand each other.)
 - Ask your boss for a raise (face-to-face)