

Unit 2

Perception and Learning

Concept of perception

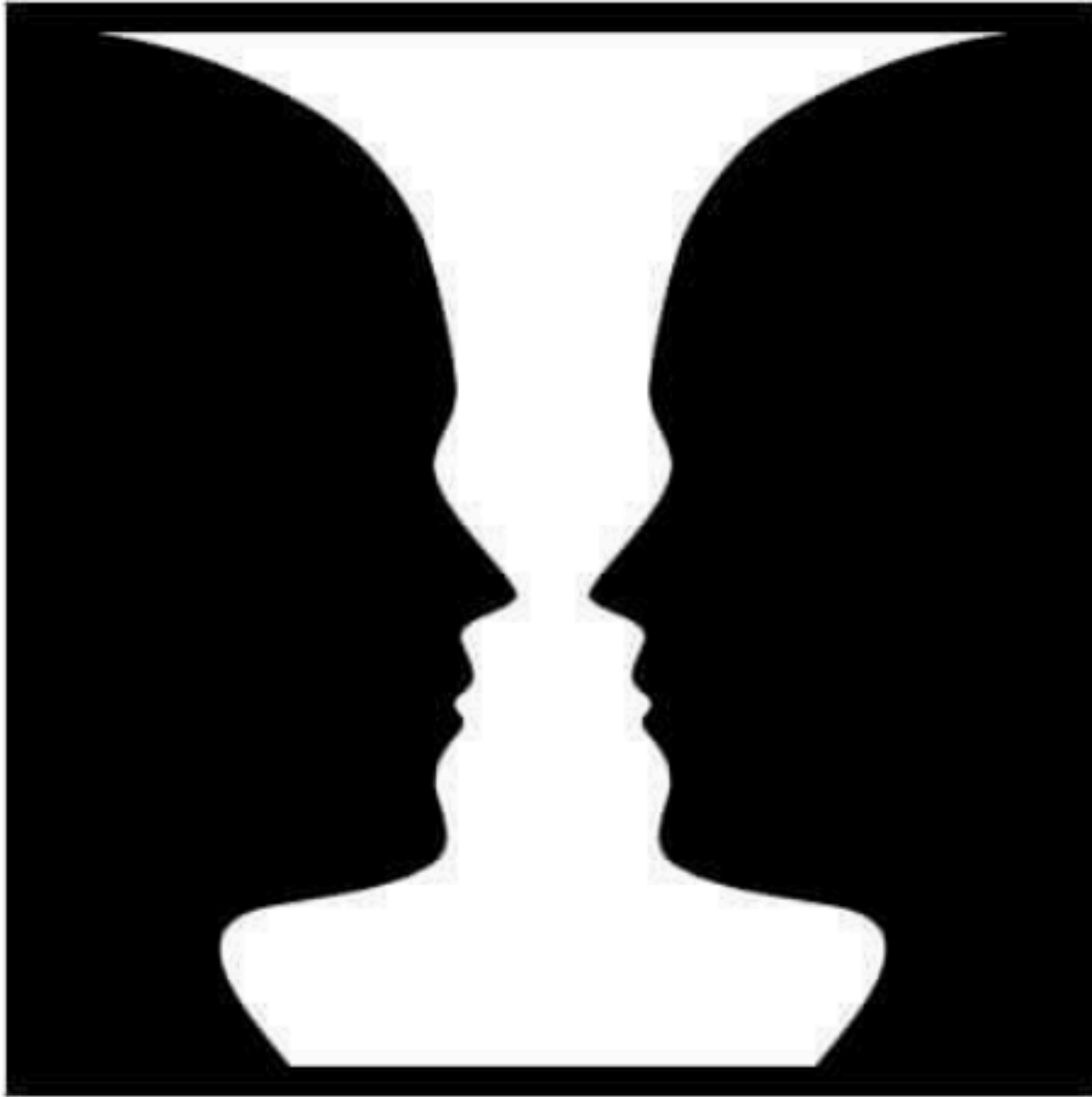
Meaning of Perception: Perception can be defined as our recognition and interpretation of sensory information. Perception also includes how we respond to the information.

- Perception is the process through which the information from outside environment is selected, received, organized and interpreted to make it meaningful to you.
- This input of meaningful information results in decisions and actions.
- It is a cognitive (mental) process
- Example: child hit brother after seeing violent movie.

According to S. P. Robbins, “Perception may be defined as a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment.”

In simple words we can say that perception is the act of seeing what is there to be seen. But what is seen is influenced by the perceiver, the object and its environment. The meaning of perception emphasizes all these three points.





Nature/feature of perception

I. Base of behavior: without perception individual cannot behave. II.

Psychological process: it is learned and individual process.

III. It is dependent: it depends on person to person, people can perceive same thing differently.

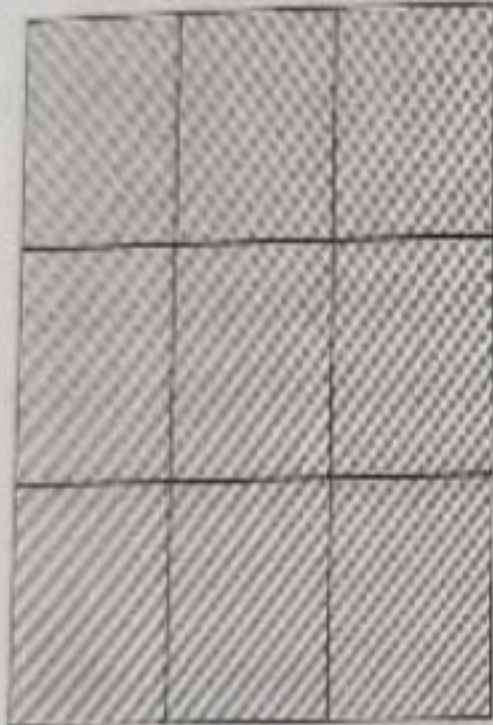
IV. Not always factual: there can be misperception or false perception about the things. See pict. Page 44

V. Based on expectation: it is directly related to the motivation and personality.
We perceive what we like to perceive.

VI. It can be developed: can be developed through education, experience, training etc. refrain

Example of perception

Figure 2.2: Same Picture Different Perception



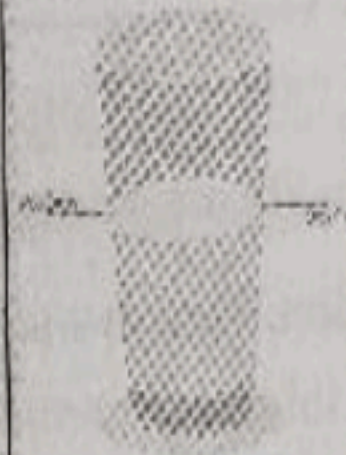
How many squares do you notice? Is it nine? Verify.



The above figure can be perceived as:

- Bread (by hungry people)
- Ball (by sports crazy people)
- Full circle – 360° (by mathematicians)

There can be many more answers....?



The Glass is half full or half empty...?

- It's full
- Half water
- Half air



This is Sun- rise or Sun set...?

Conclusion: The answer depends upon your perception. Isn't it?

Perceptual process

- Perception is a process. It has input, processes and output variables.

Input (receiving)

Perceived inputs are the objects, events, people etc. that are received by the perceiver. It begins when environmental stimuli are received through our five sense organs. i.e. skin, ear, eye, nose and tongue.

- It is the initial stage in which a person collects all information and receives the information through the sense organs.

Process

- Perceptual process are the different stages of perception we go through. The different stages are –
 - a) Selection:** Here a person doesn't receive the data randomly but selectively. A person selects some information out of all in accordance with his interest or needs. The selection of data is dominated by various external and internal factors.
- External factors – The factors that influence the perception of an individual externally are intensity, size, contrast, movement, repetition, familiarity, and novelty (originality).
- Internal factors – The factors that influence the perception of an individual internally are psychological requirements, learning, background, experience, self acceptance, and interest.

b) Organizing: Keeping things in order or say in a synchronized way is organizing. In order to make sense of the data received, it is important to organize them.

We can organize the data by –

- Grouping: Grouping the things on the basis of their similarity, proximity, continuity.
- Closure: in general, people when faced with incomplete information have a tendency to fill in the gaps themselves. So we fill in the missing parts and make it complete to derive the proper meaning. Like MGMT=? [management]
- Simplification: to make the information more meaningful and understandable, people go through simplification process. It is done to avoid the information overload. [select important information and reject less important]

c) Interpreting: Finally, we have the process of interpreting which means forming an idea about a particular object depending upon the need or interest.

- Interpretation means that the information we have sensed and organized, is finally given a meaning by turning it into something that can be categorized.

Output (emotions and behaviours): the output of perception can be seen in the form of behaviour and emotions. They may be the feelings, actions, attitude etc.

Importance of Perception in OB

- We need to understand what the role of perception in an organization is. It is very important in

establishing different role of perceptions like –

- Understanding the tasks to be performed.
- Understanding associated importance of tasks allotted.
- Understanding preferred behavior to complete respective tasks.
- Clarifying role perceptions.

□ For example, every member in a group has to be clear regarding the role allotted to them.
Programmer writes the code, tester checks it, etc.

Factors affecting perception

A number of factors operate to shape and sometimes distort perception. These factors are:

- In the perceiver (people)
- In the object or target being perceived
- In the context of the situation in which the perception is made. (environment)

Factors in Perceiver (people)

- The key factors in the perceiver that affects the perception are explained briefly.
- **Attitude:** Attitude of an individual influences what he/s the perceives about other or event. For example, a teacher who has negative attitudes towards

students (male) with long hair and earring will perceive them in a negative way.

- **Motives:** What is the urgent needs and desire of an individual? What his motive are often plays an important role in determining what he perceives. i.e bread
- **Experience:** Experience and knowledge serve as a basis for perception. One's successful experience enhances the perceptive ability of an individual.
- **Expectation:** Individual often sees what they expect to see. In this regard, expectation is another key factor that affects the perception.

Factors in the target (object): It refers to the factor associated with target to be perceived. They key factors in the target are explained briefly.

- **Size:** The principle of size says that the larger the object, the more is the probability that it is perceived. Size attracts the attention of the individual. A full page spread advertisement attracts more attention than a few lines in a classified section.
- **Intensity:** High intensity increases the changes of selection. If the message is bright, if sentences are underlined. It gets more attention than in normal case. The greater the intensity of stimulus, the more likely, it will be noticed.
- **Frequency:** The repetition principle states that a repeated external stimulus is more attention- getting than single one. It is for this reason that advertises goes for repetitious advertising to gain the customer's attention to their product.

- **Motion:** The motion principle says that people pay more attention to a moving object than the stationary. People will be attracted more by a running train than one standing on the platform.
- **Sound:** louder and frequent is the sound, easier and quicker will be the perception and vice versa.
- **Novelty:** this principle says that new factors in the environment can attract attention, depending on the circumstances.

Factors in the situation: The key factors in the situation category that impacts the perception are explained briefly.

- **Time:** Time associated with situation is one critical factor that affects perception. For example, a student that studies deeply from the beginning understands (perceives) the subject matter easily and quickly.
- **Work setting:** The work setting affects the perception in a major way. Peaceful work setting enhances the perceptive ability of an individual. On the contrary, noisy and clumsy work setting may erode the perceptive ability.
- **Social setting:** Social setting -also affects the perception. Social surroundings related individuals, occasion, culture, etc., impact the perception. Black dress in Christians and Muslims community.

Attribution theory

- Attribution theory is concerned with how ordinary people explain the causes of behavior and events. For example, someone is angry because they are bad tempered or because something bad happened.
- This theory suggest that we observe behavior and assign causes to it.
 - The Theory also suggests that when we observe an individual's behavior, we attempt to determine whether the behavior was internally or externally caused.
- **Internal vs. external causes of behavior:**
- Internally caused behaviors are those an observer believes to be under the personal behavioral control of another individual. Thus, internally caused behaviors are said to be within control of an individual. [internal causes of behavior = internal attribution= the behavior is controllable = the person is faulty] (ability, motives, emotions)
- Externally caused behaviors are those an observer believes that the situation forced the person to behave in a particular manner. Thus, externally caused behaviors are said to be outside the control of an individual. [external causes of behavior = external attribution= the behavior is beyond the control = the person is not faulty] (other people, the situation)
- A widely accepted model proposed by **Harold Kelly** attempts to explain how

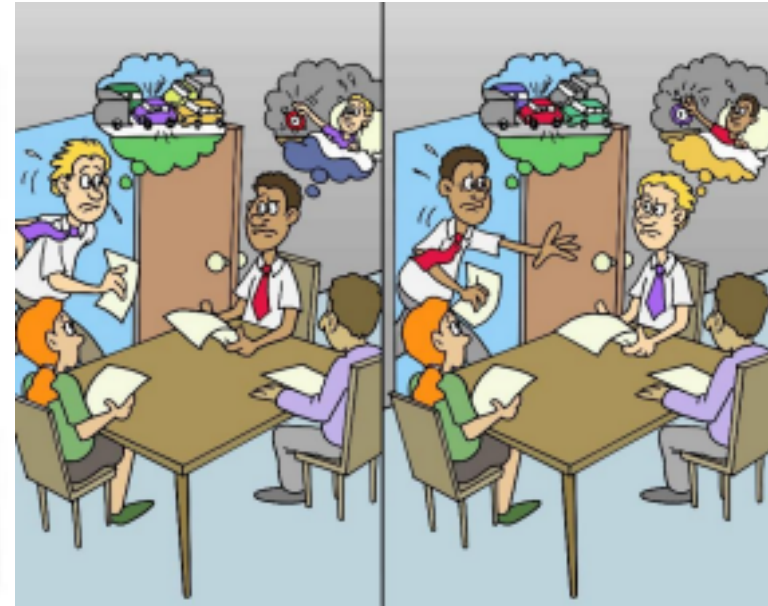
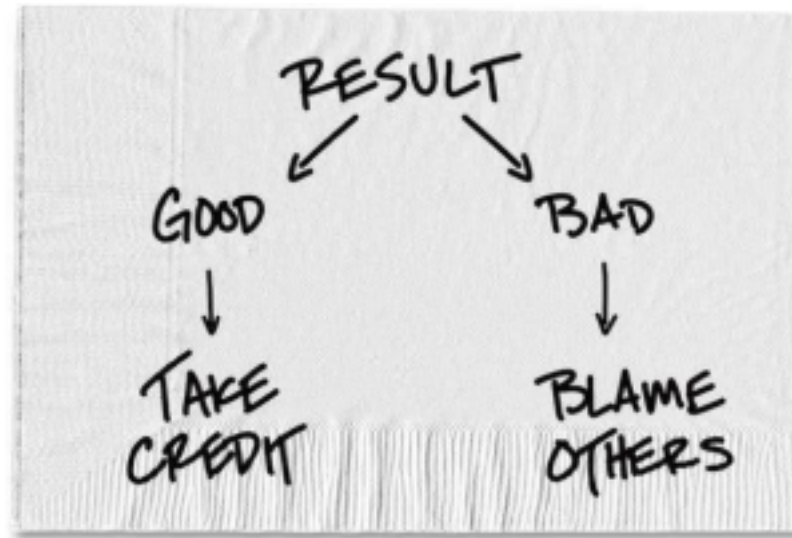
people determine why others behave as they do. This explanation states that in making attributions people focus on **three** major factors:

- 1. Distinctiveness** refers to whether an individual displays different behaviors in different situations. In case, the behavior is distinct every time, probably, it is internal, however, in case it is not, the same is due to external factors. Take an example, is Ram arrived late today also the source of complaints by co-workers for being careless? What we want to know is, if this behavior is unusual or not. If it is unusual, the observer is likely to give the behavior an external attribution. If usual then it will probably be judged as internal.
- 2. Consensus** means everyone who faces a similar situation would have reacted in a similar manner. In case everyone reacts the same manner, it is said to be externally driven; if not, then it is internally driven. As above example, Ram is late. Are all employees late who take the same route? If all late then consensus is high, we would be expected to give an external attribution to the employees. Where as if others come on time then our conclusion as to causation would be internal.
- 3. Consistency** means there is a pattern of consistency in the behavior. In case the consistency is high, it is attributed to internal factors, if not, the same is attributed to external factors. Eg. Ram is late for office- if only today then external attribution and if 2-3 times a week then internal attribution.

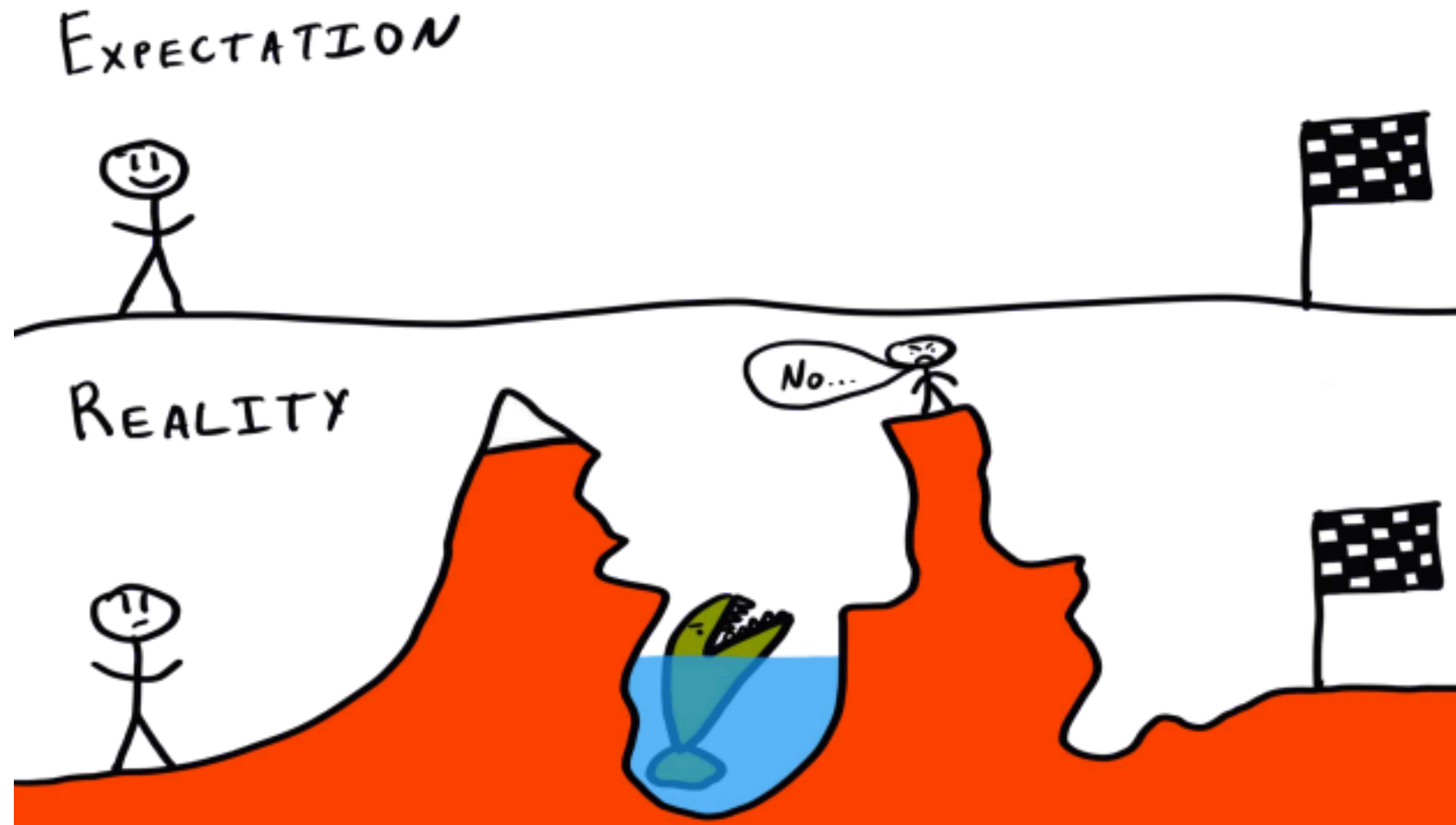
Attribution error

- An attribution error refers to the tendency of taking credit for success while blaming others or the environment for failures. Attribution error mainly occurs from the tendency of rater to judge behavior of others strictly and Judges him loosely. Attribution errors are mainly classified into three types.
- **Fundamental attribution error:** The fundamental attribution error is also called the correspondence bias. It is the tendency to attribute other people's behavior to internal factors such as personality traits, abilities and feelings.
- **Self-serving bias:** The self-serving bias is the tendency for individuals to attribute their own success to internal factors and failures to situational factors: Self-serving bias tends to increase as time passes after an event.
- **Optimistic bias:** Optimistic bias is the tendency for individuals to view themselves as relatively more successful than others. Moreover, they believe that cause of their success will remain consistent, stable and expand.
- **Fundamental**

attribution error self serving bias



OPTIMISM BIAS



Perception and individual decision making

- Perception is the process through which the information from outside environment is selected, received, organized and interpreted to make it meaningful to you.
- Decision making is the process of identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values, performance, and beliefs of the decision maker.
- Every individual face a problem and he expected to make an important decision from a vast collection of alternatives. An individual is required to go through all the alternatives and make a rational decision. But people cannot process all the information and scrutinize every single problem. As a result, they make a habit deciding on the basis of perception so we can argue that there is a link between perception and decision making.
- Decisions are influenced in most of the cases by individuals behavior, perception effects on behavior. Therefore perception is closely associated with individuals' decision-making process.
- **Individual Decision Making Theories/Model** 1. Classical or rational theory of decision making (perfect rationality model)
 - It is a rational model of decision-making that assumes that managers have

access to complete information and are able to make an optimal decision by weighting every alternative. The model then recommends a list of actions for managers to follow to arrive at the decision that's best for their organizations.

There **are four main assumptions** behind the classical model:

First is a clearly defined problem. The model assumes that the decision maker has clearly set goals and knows what is expected from him.

Second is a certain environment. The model further suggests that it is in the power of the decision-maker to eliminate any uncertainty that might impact the decision. As a result, there are no risks to account for.

The third assumption is full information. The decision-maker is able to identify all alternatives available to him and to evaluate and rank them objectively.

The final assumption is rational decisions. The decision-maker is believed to always be acting in the best interests of the organization.

2. Behavioral theory of decision making (bounded rationality model) • Behavioral approach is also known as descriptive approach and administrative model.

- This theory is proposed by Herbert A Simon, a well known economist, in which he attempts to explain how decisions are made in real life situations.

- A manager has to make decisions under different conditions and situations.
- While taking a decision how a manager perceives the things, how does he react and how does he try to resolve, all this is human behavior.
- Managers have limited and simplified view of problems because they do not have full information about the problems, do not possess knowledge of all possible alternative solutions and do not have sufficient time and resources to conduct an complete search for alternative solutions to the problems. Therefore, this model is based on two concepts: bounded rationality and satisfying.
 - a. Bonded rationality (limited): it suggest that a decision maker is limited by his values and unconscious reflexes, skills and habits. He is also limited by less than complete knowledge and information. Though most of the decision makers try to be rational but their rationality has limits.
 - b. Satisficing outcomes: it suggest that a decision maker continues to generate and evaluate alternatives. One alternative that is good enough to be acceptable is identified.

How to improve individual decision making?

- Increase information inputs (received from others)
- Proper communications (clear and simple language)
- Select appropriate timings (correct timing)
- Increase acceptance and commitment (democratic leadership style to encourage subordinate to accept and commitment for implementation)

- Create supportive environment
- Change personal habits
- Proper reward and punishment system
- Avoid prejudice and biasness
- Calculate risk
- Avoid postponement

Common biases and errors in decision making

- Anchoring bias- tendency to fix at on initial information as a starting point
- Conformation bias- based on selective perception in which we seek out information that validates our past choice.
- Availability bias- based on judgment on information that is readily available to them • Representative bias- assessing the like hood of an occurrence by trying to match it with a ore-existing category
- Escalation of commitment- increased commitment to a previous decision in-spite of negative information
- Hindsight bias- tendency for us to believe falsely that we'd have accurately predicted the outcome of an event after that outcome is actually known.

Individual differences in decision making

- Decision style
- Directive style
- Analytical style
- Conceptual style

- Behavioral style

Organizational constraints on individual decision making • Performance evaluation system

- Reward system
- Formal regulations
- System-imposed time constraints
- Historical precedents