

The slide features two thick black L-shaped bars. One is in the top-left corner, and the other is in the bottom-right corner, framing the central text.

SOCIAL PERCEPTION

Dr. Mahima Raina

Social Perception

We gather information about others to understand them, but first we need to collect that information:

How do we gather information about others?

Social Cognition vs Social Perception

Difference between the two is?

Social Perception

The process through which we seek to understand and know other people. The process involves understanding the ways in which we gather and analyse information about others.

- Verbal and non verbal communication
- First impressions
- Making interpretations and drawing conclusions

SOCIAL PERCEPTION

Non-verbal communication : Information conveyed by cues other than the content of spoken language, as well as our efforts to interpret it, is often described by the term *non-verbal communication*

Research indicates that there are five basic channels of non verbal communication : **facial expressions, eye contact including gaze, body movements, posture and touching.**

Facial Expressions

Ekman's Six *Universal* Emotions and facial expressions associated with them.

These six emotions are encoded and decoded similarly across the world by people.



Happy



Sad



Fear



Anger



Surprise



Disgust

Social Perception

We also tend to interpret information from others' bodily postures, eye contact (cold stares, teary eyes, sparkling eyes or gazing)

There can be hand and head movements too through which we transmit and interpret information.

Touch can also emit communication ranging from interest, friendliness, dominance, comfort and so on.

Social Perception

But, how accurate are we in interpreting this information?

Do you always know when you are being deceptive?

How do you decide someone is being/not being deceptive?

Deception

- We differ in terms of how positively/negatively we view the world in general
- We define deception differently. We usually make a distinction between intentionally misleading someone and unintentionally ending up doing so
- While people who are being deceptive show micro-expressions suggesting so, or **interchannel discrepancies** (discrepancies between facial expressions and bodily postures) or changes in **linguistic styles** (tone, tenor, rhythm)- we are not very accurate in noticing them because of their fleeting nature.
- Ekman and O'Sullivan (1991) found that even for people in law enforcement agencies, it is difficult to detect deception, even though it is expected from them as a part of their job.

Impression Management

- Individuals are capable of making quick judgements, which can be quite accurate but not always accurate- this is also called “thin slicing” – making judgements based on small amounts of information. Plenty of evidence supports thin slicing and the accuracy it has.
- But, first impressions can also be wrong a number of times, and they can be altered when we encounter fresh information, evidence that challenges our first impression
- Individuals use two major kinds of tactics to build impression: **self-enhancement** (exaggerating personal, professional achievements) and **other-enhancement** (asking for their advice, agreeing with their opinions, doing favors, flattering)

Impression Management

Some evidence for impression management comes from beauty bias/halo effect in interviews

People end up hiring wrong people because they get biased because of certain physical qualities – hence **self enhancement** can actually affect hiring decisions and overall organizational outcomes- one could use these tactics to boost their confidence and gain favourable outcomes

Brand management companies do the job of creating impressions on the masses and correcting negative impressions

Impression Management

Safe to conclude that first impressions have a lingering effect on our subsequent decision reg the subject (eg., we end up hiring or dating that person)

Halo effect happens because of **primacy effect** – first piece of information sticks to our brain longer (and then continues to affect our perception and decisions)

We also tend towards **belief perseverance**, or clinging to conclusions even in the face of evidence that seems to indicate we should change our mind

Questions that always surround us...

Why did they behave in this way?

Why is this happening to me?

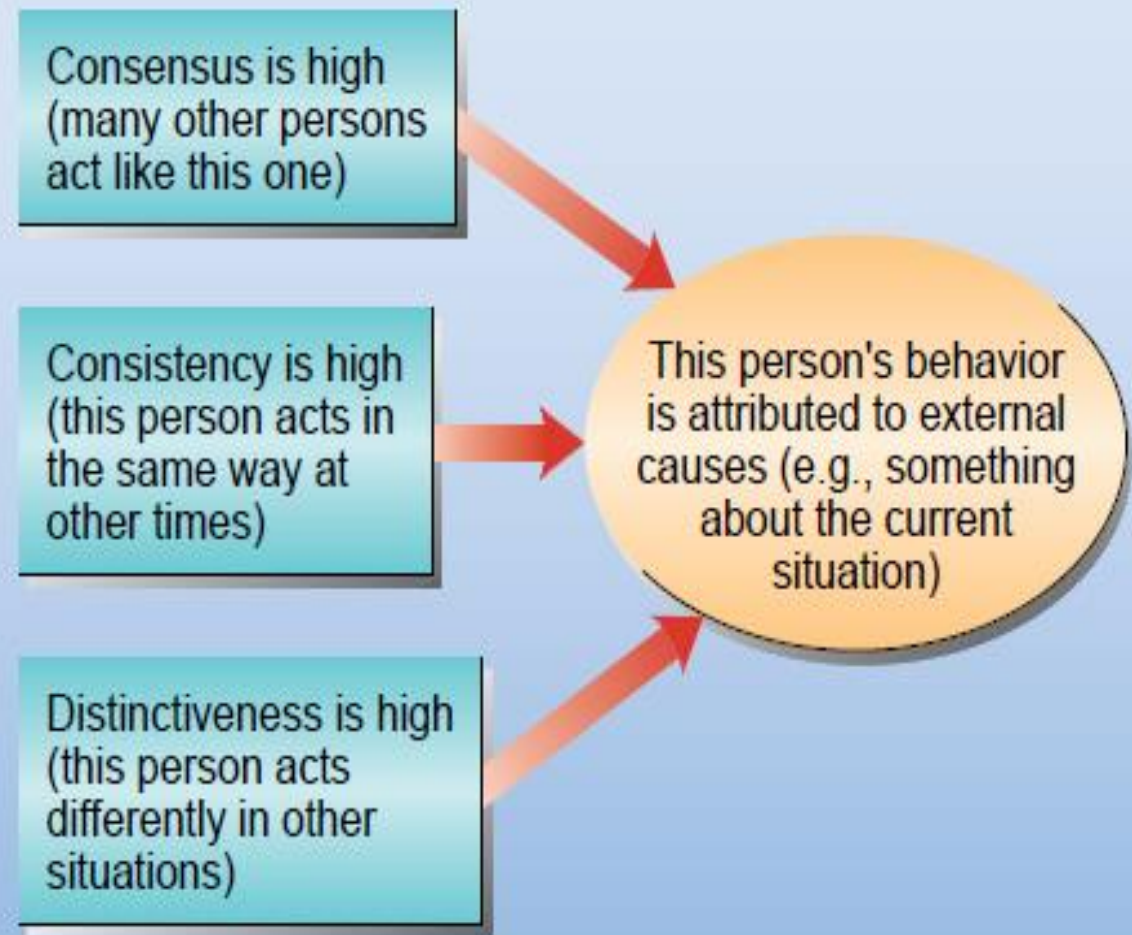
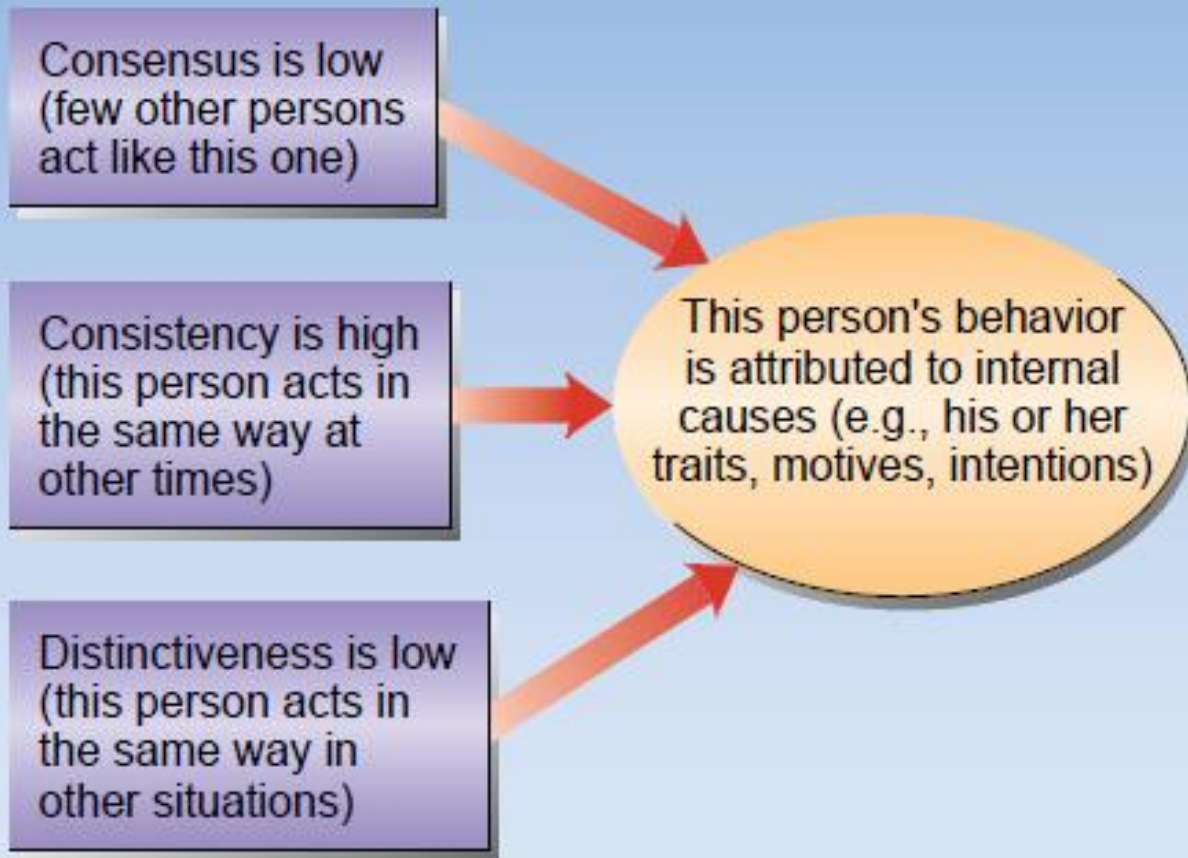
Attribution

- **Attribution:** The process through which we seek information and draw inferences is known as attribution. The process concerns understanding the reasons of others' as well as our own behaviour
- **Internal Attribution:** The inference that a person is behaving in a certain way because of something about the person such as attitude, character or personality
- **External Attribution:** The inference that a person is behaving a certain way because of something about the situation he or she is in; the assumption is that most people would respond the same way in that situation

Kelly's Attribution Theory

- To answer this question we face so many times in a day, we often focus on information about:
 - **Consensus** : The extent to which behaviour by one person is shown by other people as well.
 - **Consistency** : The extent to which the given person behaves in a similar manner to a given stimulus across time.
 - **Distinctiveness**: The extent to which a given person reacts in the same manner to different stimuli or situations

These three aspects in combination help us understand whether the reasons of behaviour were internal (e.g., personality) or external (circumstances)



KELLY'S ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Attribution: Correspondent Inference Theory (Davis, 1965)

- We are most likely to conclude that others' behaviour reflects their stable traits (i.e., we are likely to reach correspondent inferences between their behaviour and their personal qualities) when their behaviour:
 - Is freely chosen
 - Yields distinctive, non common effects
 - Low on social desirability

Attribution: Correspondent Inference Theory (Davis, 1965)

- Is **freely chosen**: Individuals often act in a certain way because the situation demands them to, it is not necessarily freely chosen
- Yields distinctive, **non common effects** : the distinctive consequences of a choice or action that are different from the consequences of other choices
- **Low on social desirability**: Any behaviour that violates our expectancy of the “normal”
- **Summary**: If the behaviour is intentional, unexpected (doesn't align with social norms) in relation to outcomes (that you see) > it can tell you something about the “person”

Attribution: Correspondent Inference Theory (Davis, 1965)

- A person chooses between two dishes:
 - **Dish A:** A classic pizza.
 - **Dish B:** A gourmet vegan salad.
- **Distinctive Outcome:**
 - Choosing the pizza: Indicates they value familiarity and comfort food. Choosing the vegan salad: Suggests they care about health or sustainability.

Observers might infer their priorities based on this unique outcome of the chosen dish.

(these are “distinct outcomes” that can come only with a pizza in this situation and not the salad)

Sources of Error in Attribution

- **Correspondence Bias/The Basic or Fundamental Attribution Error** – Tendency to explain others' behaviour as stemming from internal causes even though the evidence for a situational cause might be there
- **Actor-Observer Bias** : Attributing our own behaviour to external causes
- **Self-serving bias** : Attributing our positive outcomes to internal causes and negative to external causes
- **Belief in a Just World**: A form of defensive attribution wherein people assume that bad things happen to bad people and that good things happen to good people
- **Bias Blind Spot**: The bias blind spot indicates that we think other people are more susceptible to attributional biases in their thinking than we are.

Two-Step Attribution

Analyzing another person's behavior first by making an automatic internal attribution and only then thinking about possible situational reasons for the behavior, after which one may adjust the original internal attribution

Attribution and Depression

There are self-defeating thinking patterns and rumination (obsessively thinking about something negative in your life)

Something exactly opposite of self-serving bias is happening here- the person attributes the negative thoughts/actions to themselves rather than the situation

Lack of control

Learned Helplessness

Any positive action/outcome is attributed to chance factors (e.g., receiving support)

BE NOT SWEPT OFF YOUR FEET
BY THE VIVIDNESS OF THE
IMPRESSION, BUT SAY,
"IMPRESSION, WAIT FOR ME A
LITTLE. LET ME SEE WHAT YOU
ARE AND WHAT YOU
REPRESENT. LET ME TRY YOU."

- EPICTETUS -

WHY IS IT HARD TO IDENTIFY OUR LIMITING BELIEFS?

Activity: The Sequence

- What is bias blind spot?
- How does it affect people's perceptions and judgements?
- Locating our own bias blind spot (activity and noticing the difficulty)
+ that of others (which is relatively easy)
- Brainstorming on how to check our own blind spots in the future-
The Pause that refreshes worksheet

LET'S SUMMARIZE

This is the chain of sequence:

- **Selective Attention (how confirmation bias operates)**
- **Attribution Biases**
- **Our Needs: The need to be right vs need to be loved**
- **Emotional Reactions and Regulation**

The Power of a Pause

- Learning how to take a pause is a great skill- it helps you navigate your conflicts productively and maintain authentic relationships

1. Recognize the need to pause
2. Communicate the pause respectfully
3. Regulate your emotions – ground yourself by breathing or taking a walk (DO NOT go to people and talk negative)
4. When ready to resume- ask yourself- am I feeling better?
5. Reopen the conversation by thanking the individual to let you pause, cool off and stay focused on the solution (apply linear/analytic thinking)

Reflection

Write one thing you learned about your own biases, and how it contributed to the conflict you had. List one strategy you can commit to starting and practicing right away moving forward.